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OPINION METER
This week's poll:

Who will be the 2013 NCAA Men's Basketball champion?

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INSIDE

ASIA

North Korea warned early Thursday that its military has been cleared to wage an attack on the U.S.

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WORLD

Syrian rebels captured a military base in the south on Wednesday.

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OFFBEAT

An entire troupe of performing fleas has fallen victim to freezing temperatures.

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AS NORTH KOREA RATCHETS UP ATTACK THREATS

CNMI contingency plan as US sends missile defenses to Guam

AP

In this Sunday, April 15, 2012 file photo, a North Korean vehicle carrying what appears to be a new missile passes by during a mass military parade in Pyongyang's Kim Il Sung Square to celebrate the centenary of the birth of the late North Korean founder Kim Il Sung.

By HAIDEE V. EUGENIO
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REPORTER

Gov. Eloy S. Inos said yesterday the CNMI has worked with federal authorities to come up with a "plan of action for all CNMI residents" as North Korea ratcheted up its threats to attack U.S. bases including those in Guam, Hawaii, and the U.S. mainland. Local officials welcomed the Pentagon's announcement that it is sending ballistic missile defenses to Guam, the CNMI's closest neighbor and is home to U.S. naval and air bases in the Western Pacific.

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Exacerbating tensions

North Korea has barred South Koreans from crossing the border to work at the Kaesong Industrial Complex, the latest in a series of actions that have heightened tensions between the two nations.

About Kaesong

- Kaesong Industrial Complex was begun in 2003 to foster North-South cooperation
- Includes more than 120 factories that employ more than 50,000 North Koreans and several hundred South Korean managers
- Financed largely by the South; South Korean firms pay more than $80 million yearly in wages to North Koreans
- In 2012, factories made $470 million in goods, the largest source of North-South trade

Recent actions

Dec. 12, 2012 North Korea launches rocket; says it put a satellite in orbit
Feb. 12, 2013 North conducts underground nuclear test
March 11 U.S., South Korea begin yearly military drills
March 19 U.S. flies B-52 bombers over South Korea
March 27 Pyongyang closes military hotline with Seoul
March 28 U.S. flies B-2 stealth bombers over South
March 30 North states it is in "state of war" with South
April 2 North says it will restart its Yongbyon nuclear reactor
April 3 North bars workers from South from Kaesong plant

Source: BBC, AP, ESRI
Graphic: Pat Carr

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US missile defense shield to counter NKorea threat

WASHINGTON (AP)—The Pentagon said Wednesday it was deploying a missile defense shield to Guam to protect the U.S. and its allies in the region in response to increasingly hostile rhetoric from North Korea. The North renewed its threat to launch a nuclear attack on the United States.

The threat issued by the General Staff of the Korean People's Army capped a week of psychological warfare and military muscle moves by both sides that have rattled the region.

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Medical Referral asks Legislature for $8M FY 2014 budget

By HAIDEE V. EUGENIO
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REPORTER

Medical Referral Services director Ron Sablan asked the Legislature yesterday to appropriate $8 million for fiscal year 2014, but the program has seen its annual budget kept at $2 to $3 million even if actual expenses are between $8 million and $9 million.

Sablan

"Every year we request $8 million to $9 million to run everything but is getting only $2 million to $3 million," Sablan told Senate and House of Representatives members yesterday afternoon on Capital Hill.

He later told reporters that the Medical Referral Services' field operations manager in Honolulu, Hawaii—Marian Tudela—resigned effective yesterday. He said the acting manager is Ronald A. Taisacan. Sablan said Dolores Aldan, a former Corrections commissioner, re-

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No jail time, only $50 fine for 1 ounce or less marijuana. PAGE 3

Local

Legislature forms revenue-generation, cost-cutting panels

By HAIDEE V. EUGENIO
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REPORTER

A day after their joint leadership meeting with Gov. Eloy S. Inos and Lt. Gov. Jude U. Hofschneider, the House and Senate leaderships formed yesterday two committees—one that focuses on revenue generation to help fund the NMI Retirement Fund and other critical public services, and one on cost-cutting to stretch the government's limited revenue expected at $114 million again for fiscal year 2014.

Senate President Ralph Torres (R-Saipan) appointed Senate Vice President Victor B. Hocog (R-Rota) as chair of the Senate Committee on Revenue comprised of Floor Leader Ray N. Yumul (IR-Saipan), Sen. Francisco M. Borja (Ind-Tinian), and Sen. Frank Q. Cruz (R-Tinian).

Torres also appointed Sen. Jovita Taimanao (Ind-Rota) to head the Senate Committee on Cost-Cutting, whose members are Sens. Pete P. Reyes (IR-Saipan) and Joaquin H. Borja (R-Tinian).

Acting House Speaker Frank Dela Cruz (IR-Saipan), in a separate memo, appointed Rep. Tony P. Sablan (IR-Saipan) as chairman of the House Committee on Revenue Generation.

Sablan's committee members are Reps. Antonio R. Agulto (IR-Saipan), Roman C. Benavente (IR-Saipan), George Camacho (R-Saipan), Lorenzo I. Deleon Guerrero (IR-Saipan), Felicidad T. Ogumoro (R-Saipan), John P. Sablan (Cov-Saipan), Richard B. Seman (R-Saipan), and Ray Tebuteb (IR-Saipan).

The acting House speaker also appointed Rep. Ralph N. Yumul as chairman of the House Committee on Cost-Cutting. The members include Floor Leader Ralph S. Demapan (Cov-Saipan), Reps. Tony Benavente (IR-Saipan), Trenton Conner (Ind-Tinian), Christopher D. Leon Guerrero (IR-Saipan), Janet Maratita (IR-Saipan), Teresita Santos (R-Rota), Mariano Taitano (IR-Saipan), and Edmund Villagomez (Cov-Saipan).

"Because of the limited time to meet with the governor and lieutenant governor, for an update next week, I have asked to chairmen to convene deliberation and discussions once their Senate counterparts are appointed," Dela Cruz said in his one-page memo.

Among the revenue-generating ideas on the table are legalizing casino gaming on Saipan, establishing an offshore banking industry similar to those in the Caribbean islands but with Asian investors as main markets, and tighter enforcement of CNMI tax laws.

As of yesterday afternoon, Demapan has yet to pre-file a casino bill. Leon Guerrero, chairman of the Judiciary and Government Operations Committee, said there have been at least two investors expressing interest in investing in casino operations on Saipan.

DYS touts partnership with other agencies, groups to combat crimes against children

CLARISSA V. DAVID

Community partners join the Division of Youth Services and Lt. Gov. Jude U. Hofschneider for a group photo following Tuesday's proclamation signing ceremony declaring April as Child Abuse & Neglect Prevention Month and Early Childhood Month and April 14 to 20 as Week of the Young Child in the CNMI.

By CLARISSA V. DAVID
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REPORTER

The Division of Youth Services emphasized the role of its collaboration with governmental agencies, civic groups, and other community partners to prevent child abuse and neglect.

Julian Camacho, DYS Child Protection Unit supervisor, said the division under the Department of Community and Cultural Affairs is mandated to respond to reports of child abuse and neglect and alleviate the risk of mistreatment among children.

"DYS, however, cannot tackle this problem alone," said Camacho in his remarks Tuesday during the proclamation signing ceremony led by Lt. Gov. Jude U. Hofschneider who declared April as Child Abuse & Neglect Prevention Month.

Camacho said DYS partners help ensure that children, youth, and families in the Northern Marianas achieve self-sufficiency to reduce the risk of child abuse, a "complex problem" involving the most vulnerable group within the community.

"Families today need the help and support to take better care of their children," he said. "With the economic downturn, families face stressors which include unemployment, domestic violence, alcohol/substance abuse, to name a few. The inability to deal effectively with these stressors may result in a child being harmed."

Camacho said children "rightfully should be kept safe and secure from all harm." Unfortunately, such is not the case at all times as evidenced in reports about children becoming victims of neglect, physical or sexual abuse.

He said the signing of the proclamation should remind community members to continue their efforts to protect the health, interest, and welfare of children.

"We thank you all our partners, past and present, who have contributed one way or the other to promote the well-being of the families in our community. We thank most especially all the children and you who have shown us that a community can and will survive if its children are happy, healthy, and well nurtured," said Camacho.

This year's observance has the theme "Say it Loud and Clear. My Body Belongs to Me and U Can't Touch This" which focuses on child sexual abuse prevention.

The campaign against child sexual abuse, Camacho noted, intends to raise consciousness among children that sexual abuse is wrong and should not be tolerated.

"The theme empowers any child and any youth to stand unafraid and declare that their bodies are theirs, their bodies are sacred and no one has the right to hurt them sexually," he underlined.

Over 50 community partners and supporters attended Tuesday's ceremony, which the Lt. Gov. found "heartwarming" as it demonstrates continued cooperation within the network of organizations that deal with the issue.

"Each of us probably has children and they're very special people for us, so we need to take care of them and encourage them to report any inappropriate incidents to ensure that perpetrators are caught," said Hofschneider.

He also declared April as Early Childhood Month to recognize the importance of early learning and early literacy. The occasion also celebrates teachers, caregivers, policy makers, and other community members that bring quality early childhood education to young children.

Early Childhood Month also recognizes April 14 to 20 as Week of the Young Child which was first celebrated in the CNMI in 2007.

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No jail time, only $50 fine for 1 ounce or less marijuana

By HAIDEE V. EUGENIO
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REPORTER

Rep. Christopher D. Leon Guerrero (Cov-Saipan) pre-filed on Tuesday a bill that imposes a $50 fine and no jail time for anyone found in possession of 1 ounce or less of marijuana for personal use, similar to a traffic payable offense requiring no formal arrest and no detention.

In a brief interview yesterday, Leon Guerrero said possession of such small amount should be treated as a "non-criminal infraction."

Leon Guerrero, chairman of the House Committee on Judiciary and Government Operations, said there might be minor changes to his House Bill 18-42 and is hoping that his colleagues will support the bill that he said will also help generate revenue for the government.

At least four other members co-sponsored the bill.

Moreover, Leon Guerrero said 1 ounce or less of marijuana and the small fine from violating the Commonwealth Code, specifically 6 CMC section 2142 (c), is "not worth the court's valuable time and scarce resources."

He said his legislation does not change the law but merely clarifies that the possession of 1 ounce or less of marijuana for personal use is a non-criminal infraction, akin to traffic payable offense requiring no formal arrest and clearly no detention.

HB 18-42 provides clearer penalties and removes the "overly broad discretion now in place."

Leon Guerrero, a former police officer, said currently, marijuana possession of less than 1 ounce is punishable by $50. But he said still, this is not clearly a payable offense "despite the fact that it should be."

To remove the courts' broad discretion regarding possession, Leon Guerrero's bill also establishes a new penalty of $100 for marijuana possession in the amount over 1 ounce but not more than 1 lb.

"This provision shall be a non-criminal infraction only. As a payable offense and not a criminal violation, it shall be adjudicated like a traffic citation under Title 9 of the CNMI Code, wherein violations shall not be subject to mandatory formal arrest or detention. Any person possessing more than 1 lb but less than 2.2 lbs may be sentenced to a term of imprisonment of not more than three months, a fine of not more than $500, or both," the bill says.

Former representative Stanley Torres, who introduced CNMI marijuana legalization bills for medicinal and/or recreational purposes when he was a member of the Legislature, said yesterday Leon Guerrero's bill is a welcome legislation not only for generating revenues but also for de-criminalizing possession of small amount of marijuana.

"The bill also provides more lenient penalty to possess marijuana for personal use, in small amount. You don't throw people in jail for only that amount," Torres told *Saipan Tribune*. Torres' marijuana legalization bills were always defeated or not acted on.

But Torres, one of the longest serving lawmakers in the CNMI until January 2013, said he doesn't think anyone in the 18th Legislature would resurrect his marijuana legalization bills.

"That's maybe because most of them don't have the balls yet to move such legislation," he added.

Torres reiterated that based on studies, marijuana is a safe and effective treatment for dozens of conditions such as cancer, AIDS, multiple sclerosis, pain, migraines, glaucoma, and epilepsy, and has been considered legal in certain U.S. states. He said medicinal marijuana is legal in Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Maine, Michigan, Montana, Nevada, New Jersey, New Mexico, Oregon, Rhode Island, Vermont, Washington, and Washington, D.C.

Helping DPS

Leon Guerrero also pre-filed on Tuesday HB 18-43, mandating that the Department of Public Safety receive 50 percent of all funds collected from fines related to criminal convictions and fees for drug possession.

He said this bill, once signed into law, will help DPS become self-sustaining.

Leon Guerrero said DPS is also now tasked to increase deterrence operations in schools, and this needs additional funding.

"With increased funding on the preventative side of the law enforcement equation, crime will decrease and the Judiciary will need less funds to accommodate criminal defendants," he said in his bill.

The bill said within 12 months from its enactment, either the Supreme Court chief justice or the Superior Court presiding judge, together with the DPS commissioner, shall submit to the Legislature a report summarizing the amounts collected and deposited under this law.

PACIFIC INSURANCE DONATION CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Pacifica Insurance Underwriters general manager Shirley Sablan, fourth from left, presents a $500 check on April 4, 2013, to chair Nick Nishikawa of the Hotel Association of the Northern Mariana Islands for Supporting Sponsorship of the Inaugural Budweiser Go Kart Championship on April 6, 2013. Pictured from left are PIU accountant Gerlie Alcantara, PIU underwriter Keomi Palacios, HANMI board secretary Hiroki Sugie, Sablan, Nishikawa, HANMI vice chair Gloria Cavanagh, PIU staffer Neftis Sablan, and PIU senior underwriter Jessica Pangelinan.

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Everything on Sale, Everything must go

IN VISIT TO JFK HIGH SCHOOL

Freedom sailors encourage learning, share career experiences

By SHAINA MARIE SANTOS
JOINT REGION MARIANAS PUBLIC AFFAIRS

TAMUNING, Guam—Sailors from USS *Freedom* (LCS 1) discussed U.S. Navy career options with students at John F. Kennedy (JFK) High School in Tamuning, Guam, April 1.

Gunner's Mate 1st Class (SW) Tom Culbertson said it was important for them as sailors to reach out to the young community as the students were intrigued by topics such as boot camp, deployments, jobs and ship life.

"I remember my high school days, I didn't really think much of the military," he said. "It's important to get the word out about what we're there for."

Aviation Structural Mechanic 2nd Class (AW) Christopher Gamble said he enjoyed talking to the students.

"It's a good time, brings me back to reality," he said. "It's all work and when you come out here and talk to kids, it makes me feel special because I know I'm impacting their lives."

JFK High School health education teacher Peter Linn said he hoped students take advantage of career opportunities available after they graduate.

"Even if they weren't planned, if I saw (Sailors) in the hallway, I'd grab them and bring them in here," he said. "I want (students) to see that there is life after high school. They will graduate, they will finish and there is life after high school—they can do it. (The Sailors) are proud of what they do. They've given (students) confidence in something that not many people can do."

Cirgidah Reyes, JFK High School senior, appreciated the Sailors' presence in the classroom.

"People have their opinions on what they want to do," she said. "To have (the Sailors) actually come in and talk to (the students) about it; I thought it was really good."

Freedom arrived in Guam March 29 for a port call, during which they were scheduled to complete a number of community relations projects to include organizing Easter events and cleaning at Saint Dominic's Senior Care Home and cleaning kennels and caring for animals at Guam Animals In Need.

Freedom departed her homeport in San Diego March 1 for an eight-month deployment to the Asia-Pacific region. This is the first deployment by an LCS to the Western Pacific.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Sailors from USS *Freedom* discussed U.S. Navy career options with students at John F. Kennedy High School in Tamuning, Guam last April 1.

CNMI

From Page 1

Inos said local and federal stakeholders have developed a "Contingency Plan for Foreign Military Threats" in the past few days.

"CNMI authorities have been working arduously with the joint planning group in an effort to formulate a plan of action for all CNMI residents. Lt. Gov. (Jude) Hofschneider and I, through our Special Assistant for Homeland Security and Emergency Management, have been in constant communication with the Government of Guam and Guam Homeland Security," Inos said in a statement last night.

Delegate Gregorio Kilili C. Sablan (Ind-MP) separately said last night that the U.S. military is "fully prepared to defend the U.S. and our allies against the threat from North Korea."

"And the deployment to Guam of the Terminal High Altitude Area Defense (THAAD), a sophisticated anti-missile defense system that should be arriving on Guam in the coming weeks, is one more precautionary move to strengthen our regional defense posture," Sablan told *Saipan Tribune*.

Sablan said he was recently briefed on classified military matters that are of particular interest to the CNMI.

Senate Floor Leader Ray Yumul (IR-Saipan), who served in Iraq from October 2004 to January 2006 as a member of the 100 Battalion, 442 Infantry Regime of the U.S. Army Reserve, said yesterday that while he is concerned about North Korea's threats, he has faith in the U.S. military.

"I can attest first hand that the U.S. can thwart and counter any type of aggressive action that our adversary may attempt," Yumul told *Saipan Tribune*.

He also thinks it would be a "good idea" to have a briefing from the military about the situation.

"It will help calm the thoughts of the CNMI and Guam residents," Yumul added.

Inos said his administration continues to be kept apprised of ongoing developments, with the assistance of Guam Homeland Security and in collaboration with intelligence officers from the Department of Defense.

"As we know, North Korea has made a barrage of war threats and menacing announcements since March 7, when the United Nations Security Council imposed sanctions against it for conducting a nuclear test in February. At this time, based on information we have received, I can assure you that defense measures are in place to defend the CNMI and our brothers and sisters in Guam from a military threat. This means we are protected in many layers to deter the foreign military event. We will continue to stay actively engaged in all ongoing communications regarding this matter," the governor said.

Sablan, for his part, said the precautionary move to further strengthen the regional defense posture with the deployment of THAAD "is telling of our military's heightened concern about the crisis."

"But the move, more importantly, demonstrates our readiness and intention to defend ourselves and our allies from these threats," he added.

Guam Delegate Madeleine Z. Bordallo, in a separate statement, said she is "encouraged" that the Pentagon will soon be deploying a THAAD missile system to Guam "to defend our island and the Asia-Pacific region."

"Although North Korea continues to make aggressive threats that do not match the readiness or capabilities of their military, it is critical that we take every threat against our country seriously," Bordallo said.

She added that these threats and North Korea's nuclear test and rocket launches demonstrate the critical need for the rebalance to the increasingly vital Asia-Pacific region.

"I hope that Congress recognizes that further delays in the Guam and broader Asia-Pacific realignments make our allies question our commitment to the region. Moreover, I hope that North Korea will work with our international community to end its development of nuclear and offensive weapons systems," she added.

DEFENSE

From Page 1

On Wednesday, the Pentagon announced it will deploy a land-based, high-altitude missile defense system to Guam to strengthen the Asia-Pacific region's protections against a possible attack.

Pyongyang, for its part, said that America's ever-escalating hostile policy toward North Korea "will be smashed" by the North's nuclear strike and the "merciless operation" of its armed forces.

"The U.S. had better ponder over the prevailing grave situation," said the translated statement, which was issued before the Pentagon announced plans to send a missile defense shield to Guam.

The Pentagon had no immediate reaction to the latest statement, but earlier Wednesday Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel labeled North Korea's rhetoric as a real, clear danger and threat to the U.S. and its Asia-Pacific allies. And he said the U.S. is doing all it can to defuse the situation, echoing comments a day earlier by Secretary of State John Kerry.

"Some of the actions they've taken over the last few weeks present a real and clear danger and threat to the interests, certainly of our allies, starting with South Korea and Japan and also the threats that the North Koreans have leveled directly at the United States regarding our base in Guam, threatened Hawaii, threatened the West Coast of the United States," Hagel said.

He said he believes that the U.S. has had a "measured, responsible, serious responses to those threats."

Deployment of the Terminal High Altitude Area Defense System is the latest step the U.S. has taken to bolster forces in the region in a far-reaching show of force aimed at countering the North Korean threat.

In recent months, North Korea has taken a series of actions Washington deemed provocative, including an underground nuclear test in February and a rocket launch in December that put a satellite into space and demonstrated mastery of some of the technologies needed to produce a long-range nuclear missile. Then, several weeks ago, the North threatened to pre-emptively attack the U.S.

In response, the Pentagon announced it would enhance missile defenses based on the U.S. West Coast, and it highlighted the deployment of B-52 and B-2 bombers, as well as two F-22 stealth fighters, to South Korea as part of an annual military exercise.

As the exchange of rhetoric grew, U.S. officials this week said the Navy would keep the USS Decatur, a destroyer armed with missile defense systems, near the Korean peninsula for an unspecified period of time. Another destroyer, the USS John S. McCain, was shifted to the waters off the southwest coast of the Korean peninsula.

Tensions have flared many times in the six decades since a truce halted the 1950-53 Korean War, but the stakes are higher now that a defiant North Korea appears to have moved closer to building a nuclear bomb that could not only threaten the South and other U.S. allies in Asia but possibly, one day, even reach U.S. territory.

Even without nuclear arms, the communist North poses enough artillery within range of Seoul to devastate large parts of the capital before U.S. and South Korea could fully respond. The U.S. has about 28,500 troops in the South, and it could call on an array of air, ground and naval forces to reinforce the peninsula from elsewhere in Asia and the Pacific.

U.S. officials have said that the Pentagon's military response to Pyongyang's threats has so far been aimed more at assuring South Korea and other allies in the region that America is committed to their security. U.S. military leaders also have said that despite the escalating rhetoric, they have seen nothing to suggest that North Korea is making any military moves to back up its threats.

Hagel told an audience at the National Defense University that there is a path to peace on the troubled Korean peninsula, but it doesn't include making nuclear threats or taking provocative actions.

The land-based THAAD missile defense system includes a truck-mounted launcher, tracking radar, interceptor missiles, and an integrated fire control system. The Pentagon said the system will boost defenses for American citizens in Guam, a U.S. territory, and U.S. forces stationed there.

MEDICAL

From Page 1

mains the field operation manager for Guam.

Sablan briefed lawmakers about the Medical Referral Services' management and operations, including its annual funding.

He said in FY 2011, the program referred 800 patients to Guam, Hawaii, the Philippines, and other U.S. states.

The number of referred patients went down to 645 in FY 2012, costing $5.483 million and this still does not include personnel costs.

For the first quarter of FY 2013, the program referred 185 patients, costing the CNMI more than $1.1 million but this also excludes personnel expenses.

Personnel benefits and compensation is estimated at more than $731,000 in FY 2014.

Sablan said Medicaid patients continue to be not accepted in some off-island medical centers including those in Guam and Hawaii, and those deferred are sent to the Philippines instead. He said Medicare patients are normally sent to Hawaii although some go to Guam, depending on their medical condition and whether the service can be provided in Guam.

He also said the program has made arrangements with travel agencies to continue to transport medical referral patients despite some financial challenges.

Lawmakers took turns asking Sablan questions about the program. But just like other agencies approaching the Legislature, there is no guarantee that the Medical Referral Services will get the amount it is asking for.

MPLT willing to OK new loan for hospital

By MONETH G. DEPOSA
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REPORTER

The Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. may finally get some badly needed funding following revelations yesterday that a new proposed line of credit for the public hospital is under serious consideration and may get approval soon.

Marianas Public Land Trust board chair Pedro Deleon Guerrero confirmed with *Saipan Tribune* yesterday that the corporation has formally submitted a new loan proposal of $3 million with a per annum interest of 7 percent.

"They did submit a request which we are now reviewing… it's under serious consideration. The possibility (of approval) is there and it's just a matter of trying to see the most current financial standing of the corporation," said Deleon Guerrero, who admitted his personal support to the new loan request from the hospital.

MPLT advanced the hospital $4.58 million line of credit last year which amount included the $1.58 million funding for the electronic health record system project. Despite the severe cash-flow problem at the public hospital, Deleon Guerrero recognized the diligent effort of the corporation in paying up-to-date the loan interest monthly of $16,000 until the agency paid in full the $3 million principal on March 13.

For the $1.58 million loan for electronic health record project, the full obligation is expected to be paid as soon as the corporation draws down the "incentive" payment it will receive from the federal agency representing the hospital's meaningful use of the system. CHCC stands to receive $1.4 million from this incentive payment this year.

Deleon Guerrero said yesterday that he's convinced that the corporation made improvements particularly in the area of its revenues and finances that would warrant for the agency's capability to pay back loan, if approved.

"I believe that there are some improvements made (at the hospital) and I hope that we get the information we need so that we may be able to go ahead and approve it. As a board trustee, I am ready to give my approval (on this loan request)," said Deleon Guerrero who pointed out that he's speaking this view as an individual member of the board.

According to the chairman, when the MPLT board approved last year the line of credit for the hospital, the corporation was still in its most challenging financial times. But still, he said, CHCC managed to fulfill its obligation on time.

Among the requirements and information MPLT is asking the CHCC for the new loan request is the business plan, a document that the corporation earlier admitted has yet been developed at this time.

"That's always been a requirement because the interest of MPLT is to ensure that the hospital is being operated the way it should be operated and a business plan is very essential in reference to providing sound management operation," explained the chairman.

However, Deleon Guerrero hinted that without this business plan the loan request may still be approved provided other important documentations are submitted including among others necessary assessment and recommendations from professionals.

If the $3 million new line of credit is approved, Deleon Guerrero said CHCC can pay the loan partially until it is fully paid within the 12-month period. The interest rate, however, is a must to be paid monthly to the MPLT.

GUAM VISIT CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

San Antonio Elementary student Christian Merante and other participants toured Memorial Park in Agana as part of the Guam Tourism Summit on Jan. 31, 2013. Merante's participation in the summit was funded by the Marianas Tourism Education Council.

Manta Ray Band gears up for concert tour in Japan, Korea

By MONETH G. DEPOSA
moneth_deposa@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The islands' pride and joy, the Manta Ray Band, is bracing for another round of appearances in the international scene to showcase its musical talents to a wider audience.

The band's musical director William DeWitt disclosed to *Saipan Tribune* yesterday that plans are underway for the Manta Ray Band's concerts in Japan and Korea next year.

"We are looking to organize a tour to Japan and Korea in 2014 that will include some adjudicated performances at international festivals in Seoul and Tokyo. In the works is a special concert at Tokyo's Disney World theme park," said DeWitt, adding that the tour will most likely to occur in March 2014.

Like before, DeWitt said they are thrilled to have the opportunity to showcase the amazing students in concert. The group had recently went home victorious from the Tumon Bay Music Festival where they won 11 gold and three three silver awards.

For DeWitt, these honors are an indication of just how far the musical program has advanced in the last few years.

At present, the band members are also preparing for a special event that will also showcase other young music talents on island. On this occasion, band members are currently working on a brand new repertoire to complement their established pieces.

DeWitt said music from *Pirates of the Caribbean*, *Les Miserables*, and Whitney Houston will highlight the upcoming performances.

"We are also planning to add a uniquely arranged version of the CNMI anthem to our play list and selections from the *Lion King*," said DeWitt. The group's award winning pieces from the Tumon Bay Music Festival will also be played in the upcoming events.

This early, DeWitt bared the band's plan to come back to the Tumon Bay Music Festival next year.

DeWitt disclosed that besides the concert tour early next year, the Manta Ray Band is also looking forward to its most ambitious project that involves a collaboration with Dr. Roman Rudnytsky (concert pianist) on George Gershwin's famed *Rhapsody in Blue.*

"This 17-minute opus will go in front of audiences in the Spring of 2014," added DeWitt.

The Manta Ray Band won a silver award in the London Celebration Music Festival held in July 2012 during the Summer Olympics. Members also performed at 2008 Beijing Olympics and had a remarkable performance three years ago in New York's Carnegie Hall where it also won silver honor. In the past, the group also swept major awards and hailed overall champion in the Guam Tumon Bay Music Festival.

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OAG opposes Fund's transfer of lawsuit to federal court

The Office of the Attorney General is opposing the NMI Retirement Fund's transfer to federal court of the Fund's lawsuit filed in 2006 against the CNMI government.

Assistant attorney general Teresita Sablan said the Fund has not and could not provide the U.S. District Court for the NMI with some other basis to justify removal of the entire case.

Even if the federal court determines the Fund properly removed the Commonwealth Ports Authority's motion for writ of mandamus, the remainder of the case should be remanded to Superior Court, according to Sablan in a motion for remand filed by Gov. Eloy S. Inos, the CNMI government, and other co-defendants in the Fund lawsuit.

Sablan said the Fund has not established that the Fund Trustee *ad litem* is an "officer of the court" under the federal officer removal statute.

Second, Sablan said, should the federal court determine that the removal of the lawsuit was in fact proper, the transfer must be limited to CPA's motion for writ of mandamus.

The government lawyer said the Fund only refers to CPA's motion for writ of mandamus in its notice of removal.

CPA recently filed a motion for writ of mandamus, asking the Superior Court to direct the Fund to comply with Public Law 17-82 that allows Fund members to withdraw the full amount of their contributions without separating from the government.

Because of CPA's motion for writ, the Fund then removed its 2006 lawsuit filed in Superior Court and then transferred it to federal court.

The removal prompted CPA to file its emergency motion in federal court.

In the emergency motion, CPA legal counsel Robert T. Torres said the removal petition implicates no federal interest and ignores the important interest of the Commonwealth in enforcing its laws.

The Fund, through its trustee *ad litem* Joseph Razzano, has asked the federal court to deny what it called CPA's meritless motion for writ.

The Fund filed the lawsuit in Superior Court in 2006 against then Gov. Benigno R. Fitial, the CNMI government, and co-defendants over the government's failure to remit required payments to the Fund. Inos replaced Fitial as a defendant in the case.

In 2009, Superior Court Associate Judge Kenneth Govendo ruled that the government owes the Fund $282 million in damages and that the law suspending government contributions to the Fund is unconstitutional. ***(Ferdie de la Torre)***

CAREER FAIR CLARISSA V. DAVID

Manager Neda C. Deleon Guerrero of the Northern Marianas College Career Center, right, talks about the upcoming 2013 Career Fair at the Rotary Club of Saipan meeting on Tuesday. Looking on is Rotary president Pete Shilling.

Tinian Mayor settles TCGC counsel's lawsuit

Tinian Casino Gaming Commission legal counsel Elliott A. Sattler's 2007 lawsuit against the Tinian Mayor's Office has been settled.

Sattler and Tinian Mayor Ramon Dela Cruz, through their respective counsels Braddock J. Huesman and Robert T. Torres, asked the U.S. District Court for the NMI on Wednesday to cancel the hearing in this matter and order that the case remain closed.

"The parties appreciate the court's patience in allowing them to settle this dispute without the need for further litigation," Torres and Huesman stated.

A hearing in the case was set for yesterday, April 4, but the parties have engaged in settlement discussions in the hopes of resolving the matter without the need for additional briefing and a hearing.

Torres and Huesman said they met on Tinian where they discussed the new budgetary law and its effects on the issues surrounding the case.

The lawyers said the parties reviewed and discussed the new Tinian Municipal budget appropriations law.

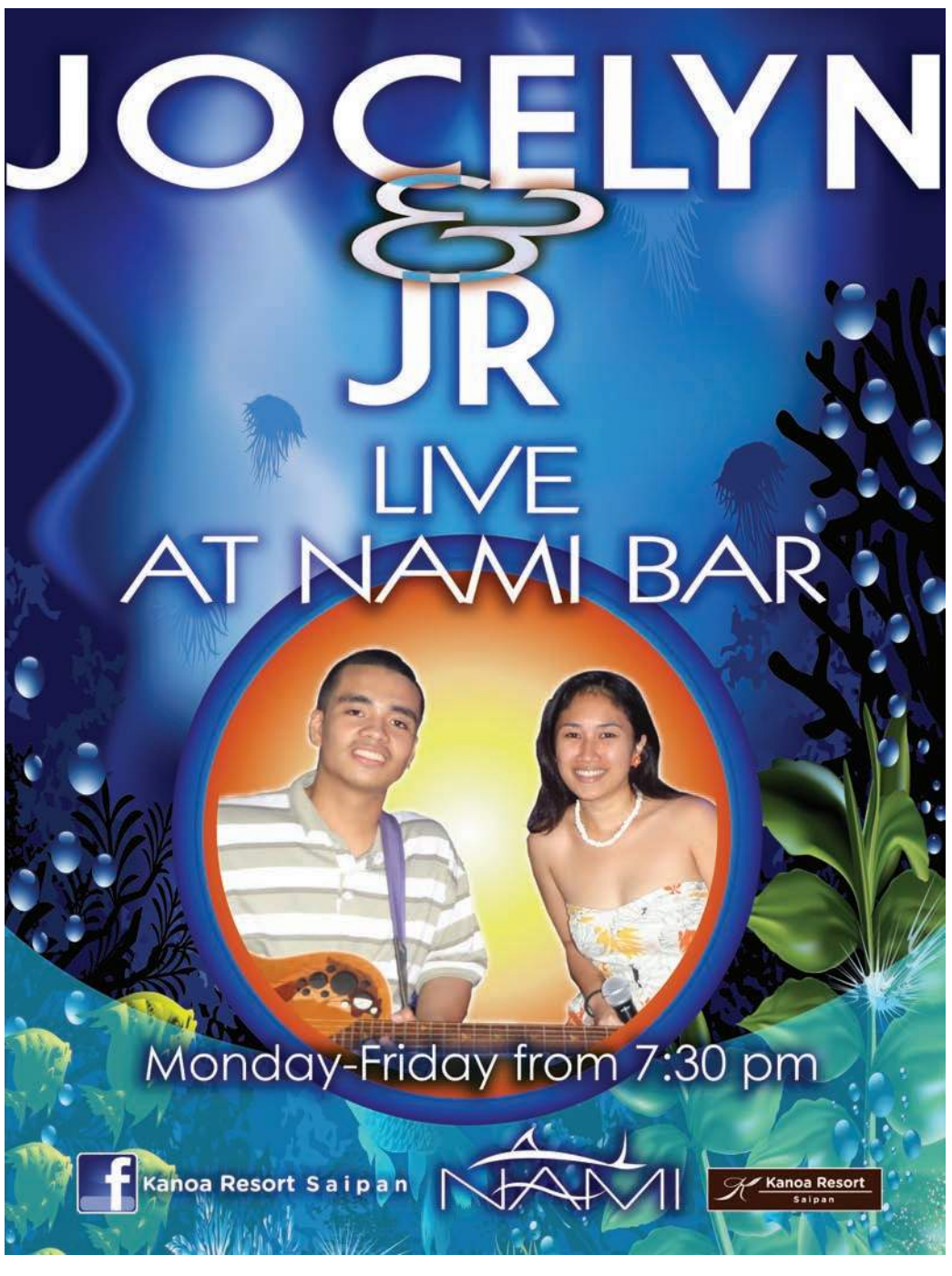
They said the parties agree that the new law does not adversely affect nor violate the consent decree entered in this case.

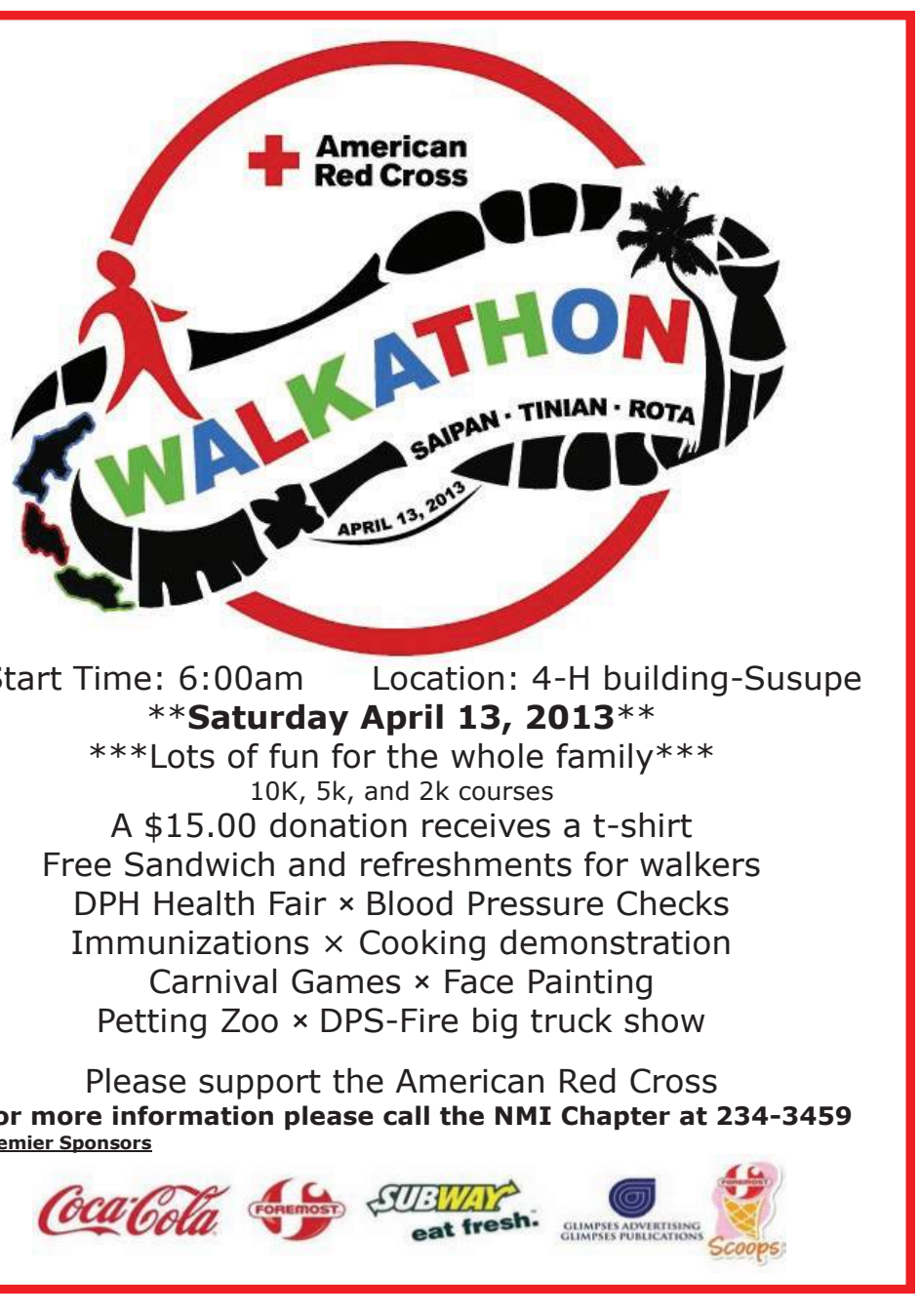
"As such, the parties agree that the matter is resolved and that the court's previously entered consent decree remains in effect and that there is no need for any motion or enforcement at this time," the lawyers added.

In 2007, Sattler filed the lawsuit against then Tinian Mayor Jose P. San Nicolas involving his attempts to interfere with the TCGC's budgetary authority.

In June 2007, the federal court approved a consent decree entered by Sattler and the Tinian mayor. The decree provides that the mayor and his agents could not retaliate against either Sattler or TCGCC by "affecting, altering, or otherwise interfering with the expenditure authority of the commission."

U.S. District Court for the NMI then chief judge Alex Munson reinstated Sattler's $110,000 per annum salary after declaring as unconstitutional a provision of the Tinian Municipal Appropriations Act of Fiscal Year 2006. ***(Ferdie de la Torre)***

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Saturday April 13, 2013
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Family of drowning victim donates $10K to ARC

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Morita family attorney, William M. Fitzgerald, presents a check to NMI Red Cross Chapter director John Hirsh.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

File photo of the Morita family. Second from left is Megumi Morita, who died on Saipan in 2005 during a tragic diving accident.

The family of the late Megumi Morita of Kobe, Japan has donated $10,000 to the American Red Cross-NMI Chapter.

The funds will be used to support a water safety campaign. Morita died in a diving accident at the Grotto in 2005. She was only 25.

Her family, along with a travel company, are donating these funds in honor of Morita to help insure that tourists and locals better understand the risks and dangers of the ocean.

The Red Cross is a world leader in providing swim training and emergency lifesaving skills. "We are grateful to the Morita family for their generous contribution," said John Hirsh, executive director of the NMI Red Cross. "We will be using these funds to support a beach sign public awareness initiative as well as scholarships for swim lessons and lifeguarding training. This support will honor Megumi's life by creating a long lasting legacy of improving water safety here in the NMI."

Statement from the Morita family, "She was the most favorite daughter of the family, although she was the only daughter there. She was the big sister of the family, although she had elder and younger brothers. She was the athlete of the family, encouraging all family members into tennis, ping-pong, and other sports activities. She was manager and cheerleader of all family activities, planning and leading everyone into enjoyable outings, picnics, and excursions during holidays for the family."

Morita visited Saipan for the first—and the last—time in July 2005, where she died in a diving accident at Grotto.

"Never again," was her parents' cry. Their daughter was gone, forever. Having gone through a tremendously agonizing time, her parents wished that this would not happen to other families. ***(ARC)***

Ward shares career experience at luncheon

TUMON, Guam—The commanding officer of U.S. Naval Base Guam (NBG) was the guest speaker at the Navy League of the United States Guam Council luncheon at the Outrigger Guam Resort last April 2.

Capt. Mike Ward shared his career history and experiences in the Navy with council members. Ward said his presentation was more of a reflection in what the Navy and its sailors have done in the last 23 years along his side.

"It was a privilege to highlight what I have done and (have) been able to do," Ward said. "To give insight to my career in what I had a chance to do, and to be honored to do in serving the nation and wearing the Navy's uniform is just a snapshot of what sailors, chiefs, and officers are doing right now in the Navy and have done since the Navy has been around."

The council invites service members such as Ward from each of the sea services they support to their quarterly meetings as an opportunity for members to engage with the military.

"The whole idea of the Navy League is to educate the civil population as to what the sea services do for a living because we are a maritime nation," said John Dennett, council president. "If you look at the huge amount of trade that goes over the ocean trade lanes without (which) we can't survive, so it is very important to have these meetings."

Dennett said comments from the membership showed they were very pleased with the presentation.

"The captain did a great job highlighting his career, bringing in all the action of the men and women who make the supporting element of the life in the Navy on a carrier, the forward-deployed elements," he said. "That's hard to read about it, but to get that in first person really brought it home and to put a face with the photo, it really helped."

For more information, contact the Joint Region Marianas Public Affairs Office at (671)349-4055/349-3209. ***(PR)***

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'MIAP cards all expired in November'

By MONETH G. DEPOSA
moneth_deposa@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Beneficiaries of the government's Medically Indigent Assistance Plan can no longer avail of free prescription drugs after it was learned that all of the program's eligibility cards expired in November of last year.

» Reopening of indigents health program dim

PHI Pharmacy vice president Bruce Cohen confirmed this with *Saipan Tribune* yesterday, saying that his company totally stopped the service since November 2012 upon the expiration of all MIAP cards that they honor for free medication.

PHI Pharmacy is the sole pharmaceutical firm servicing MIAP clients.

Cohen said that since 1996 PHI Pharmacy ha been providing the benefit to hundreds of MIAP beneficiaries as a form of community service.

Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. board chair Joaquin Torres yesterday expressed disappointment on the status of the program, which he confirmed was closed due to several issues.

Torres said the board, since last year, has been advocating to CEO Juan N. Babauta MIAP's reopening but to no avail. In the board's recent decision not to renew Babauta's contract, the matter has been included among his many "failures."

The chairman pointed out that he remains "optimistic" that something can be done to revive the terminated services to indigents through the use of CPE, or certified public expenditure, which able to increase reimbursements from Medicaid.

In a brief interview with Babauta on Wednesday, he admitted that MIAP's reopening remains uncertain due to funding issues. He said revival of the program will depend on the CNMI Medicaid Office which he believes should determine the eligibility list. No decision, he said, has been reached to date.

Medicaid Office administrator Helen Sablan is currently on official business off-island yesterday.

MIAP is a program established to provide assistance to non-insured indigents by providing discounted rates on their prescription drugs as determined by the healthcare corporation. Its funding is from the portion of the compact impact money provided to the CNMI yearly, which covers citizens of Federated States of Micronesia.

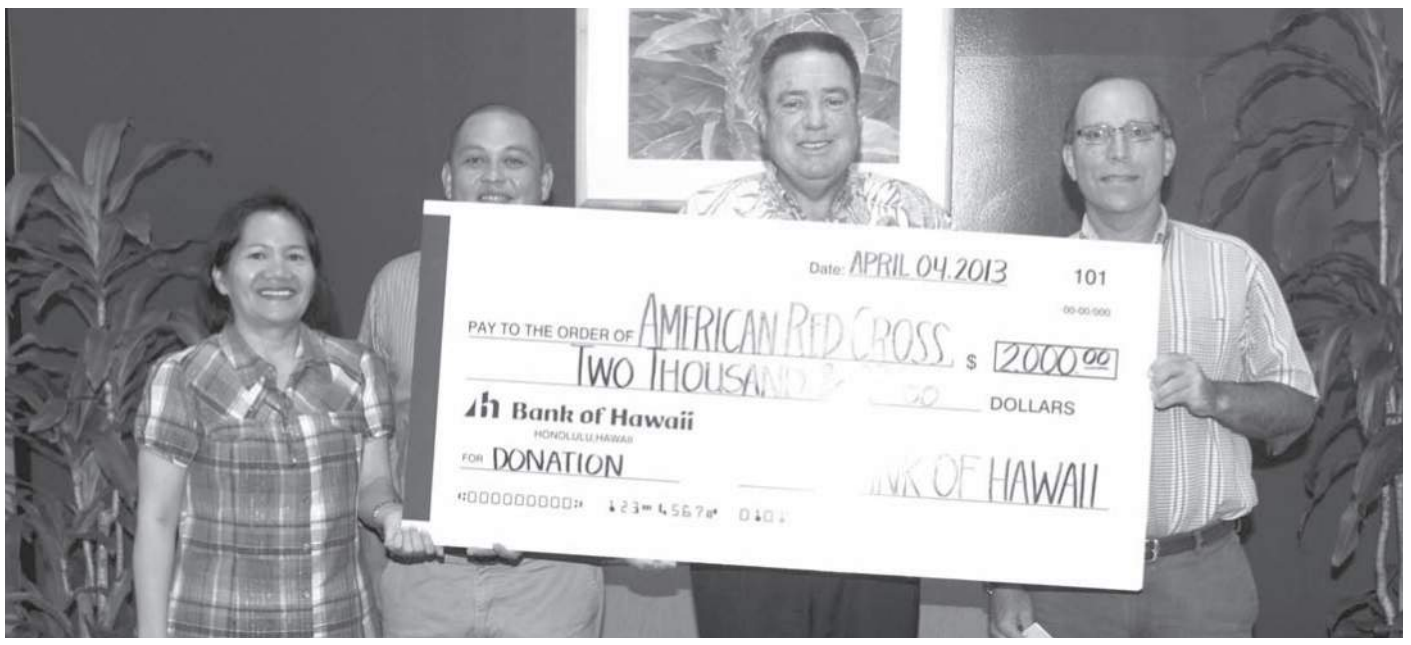
MIAP clients are those who did not qualify to the Medicaid or Medicare programs.

Corporation officials earlier disclosed their desire to transfer all functions and responsibility of the MIAP to the central government, which also handles the state Medicaid program.

CHCC, under the regulation, has the responsibility to determine who are eligible to avail MIAP services and an identification card is issued to qualified clients which they use in availing discounted medical drugs. This MIAP card is good for one year and can be renewed annually.

Saipan Tribune learned that because of the limited resources and austerity measures implemented at the corporation since last fiscal year, its MIAP office was closed down. However, it was then indicated that there are still over a hundred active members that can avail of the program's services in 2012.

Many MIAP cards were not renewed last year due to lack of personnel to handle the program.



BOH DONATION CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

American Red Cross Emergency Services director J.D. Tenorio, second left, and executive director John Hirsh, right, receive a $2,000 check from Bank of Hawaii's Service manager Lisa San Nicolas, left, and deputy division manager John Sheather, second right, on Thursday, April 4, at BoH's Puerto Rico branch office. The donation will go toward supporting one of ARC's major fundraisers for the year, the Walkathon, scheduled for April 13.

Active members oppose retiree's interpretation of refund laws

By MONETH G. DEPOSA
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REPORTER

Active members of the NMI Retirement Fund yesterday expressed their opposition on outspoken retiree Sapuro Rayphand's interpretation of the two refund laws that received their support.

Robert Hunter, on behalf of fellow active Fund members, yesterday provided a statement contradicting Rayphand's interpretation that Public Laws 17-82 and 18-2 are somehow unconstitutional.

"Neither of the two laws that seek to refund the contributions of withdrawn members directly or indirectly 'diminishes or lowers the pensions' of current retirees. There is no language in either law that calls for either, and certainly the action of the simple return of withdrawn member's contributions that are held separately from other Fund resources and may only benefit active members, neither diminishes nor lowers the pensions of current retirees," Hunter's statement indicated, adding that this isn't true even in the broadest of possible interpretations.

If Rayphand's interpretation was accurate, according to Hunter, then the transfer of active members to the Defined Contribution plan was a violation of the constitution.

"So would have been the changes in requirements to the maximum number of years an employee was permitted to work and still withdraw their contributions. One might argue then that so was the ability of Class II members to buy into Class I membership and retire immediately," he added.

Hunter said that with regard to the history of both laws, active members are concerned about the loss of entire contributions, having not seen one single benefit from these considerable monies withheld from their pay.

Hunter cited as an example a certain Joe Pangelinan, who worked very hard in the development and promotion of the initial legislation, and a number of members worked similarly hard to encourage its passage.

"And this effort to ensure that our contributions are returned as speedily as possible and safeguarded in the interim, and attempts to ensure active members are represented in the ongoing U.S. District Court proceedings related to the Fund, has been ongoing and continues," he said.

On the suggestion that the passage of the law was political, Hunter labeled this not only factual but it diminishes the effort of many members who have spent countless hours writing, organizing meetings, gathering petition signatures, corresponding with the court, and others.

"It attempts to diminish the real intent of the laws, which were to ensure that the entirety of our contributions are not lost, and the future liabilities posed by active members and which can never mathematically be met under any realistic scenarios, are removed from the equation. We cannot simply let these same retirement issues continue for another 50 or 60 years," said Hunter.

"While we certainly understand the desperation of the current retirees, wiping out the contributions of a class of members who have seen no benefit from monies taken from them, and who will need to reinvest these monies in instruments of their choosing that will help supplement what will be a significantly more meager retirement than that the current retirees have enjoyed (In fact benefits that will be two to three times less), and who will be working 10 to 20 years longer, and whose transfer out was premised on the refund of their contributions… is simply a non-solution," added Hunter.

Flashback

A LOOK BACK AT PAST YEARS' HEADLINES

Apr. 5, 2004

House: Stop Tanapag sewage overflow

Noting the perennial sewage overflow in Tanapag, the House of Representatives adopted a resolution urging the Commonwealth Utilities Corp. to expeditiously address the problem. The House adopted H.R. No. 14-21, which cited that the recurring sewage overflow from the CUC's T-1 Lift Station not only contaminates the nearby beach waters but also poses health risks at the vicinities of the Tanapag Social Hall and the Children's Park. Reps. Justo S. Quitugua, Oscar M. Babauta, Jesus SN. Lizama, Janet U. Maratita, Claudio K. Norita, Norman S. Palacios, and Timothy P. Villagomez-a former CUC executive director-introduced the resolution.

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Apr. 5, 2005

'Act on FY06 budget promptly and openly'

The Executive Branch is calling on the Legislature to begin fiscal year 2006 budget deliberations promptly and openly "to avoid haste and errors." "I urge the Legislature.to open its doors to public input, to make deliberation on the budget an open and transparent process, to begin work immediately and avoid haste and the errors that can result when action is delayed until the last minute," said Gov. Juan N. Babauta in his April 1 budget transmittal letter to the Legislature. Most importantly, he said, the Legislature should "acknowledge the real, present-day costs of providing the core public services." Babauta vetoed last January the Legislature-approved $217-million appropriation for FY 2005, citing, among others, that it was "unresponsive" to the government's actual needs.

PSS: $50M budget for FY06 far-fetched

Although the Babauta administration gave the Public School System a 22-percent increase in its fiscal year 2006 budget plan, education officials still have reservations that the $50 million earmarked for its operations and expenses would be approved. "The problem is, where is the revenue going to come from?" said PSS finance director Richard Waldo. Close to 50 percent or $106.9 million of the government's $225 million budget proposal for FY 2006 would go to four agencies: Department of Public Health, Department of Public Safety, Department of Corrections, and PSS.

Apr. 5, 2006

Minority bloc slams wage cut bill

The House minority bloc lashed at the administration yesterday over the wage reduction bill, saying the measure is inequitable and lacks sufficient basis. House minority leader Rep. Arnold I. Palacios noted that House Bill 15-115 would impact only civil service employees. This personnel category, he said, should be the last to be affected by a compensation cut. He cited an August 2002 memorandum submitted by Civil Service Commission legal counsel John Cool, in relation to the previous administration's work-hour reduction plan. In the memorandum, Cool listed actions that need to be taken before cutting the wages of permanent civil service employees: hiring freeze; cost reduction measures such as voluntary work-hour reduction, voluntary leave without pay, elimination of premium pay and differentials, and transfers or consolidation of functions and duties; reduction or termination of limited term employees; and reduction or termination of probationary employees.

Business group leader welcomes CUC return

Saipan Chamber of Commerce president Charles V. Cepeda welcomed the Fitial administration's pronouncement that the Commonwealth Utilities Corp. will regain its autonomous status. "It's good that the administration is thinking things through and considering other options," said Cepeda yesterday. "It means that the administration is being open-minded."

Wiseman finds probable cause to charge suspended lawyer Atalig

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
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REPORTER

Superior Court Associate Judge David A. Wiseman yesterday found probable cause to warrant the filing of charges against Antonio M. Atalig, a suspended lawyer who is facing a new domestic violence case.

At a preliminary hearing, Wiseman determined that there is probable cause to believe that the crimes of child abuse, assault and battery, contempt, and three counts of disturbing the peace were committed and that Atalig may have committed the offenses.

Wiseman ordered the 56-year-old Atalig to answer the charges.

Arraignment will be on Monday.

Assistant attorney general James McAllister called to the witness stand Detective Flora Danica B. Aguon who testified how the domestic violence occurred at Atalig's residence in Papago on March 14, 2013.

Atalig, who allegedly appeared drunk, came to the residence, shouting and kicking the sliding door. He then allegedly assaulted his minor daughter, who pushed him to prevent him from touching her mother.

Atalig defended himself at the hearing after Wiseman denied his request for a court-appointed counsel.

Wiseman stood pat in his order dated Oct. 16, 2012 in connection with Atalig's previous criminal case, in which he determined that the suspended lawyer is not an indigent who should be allowed representation at the taxpayer's expense.

In that order, the judge disclosed that according to an assessment conducted by the chief probation officer, Atalig's house, which has a swimming pool, is valued at $600,000 to $700,000.

Atalig was found also to have several other real properties on Saipan and Rota. His wife is employed and that the defendant has a bank account and some business receivables due to him.

Wiseman said two of Atalig's children are attending private schools at a cost of $860 per month and tennis lessons cost $270 per month for the three children.

"The list goes on with other expenses which are inconsistent with the standard and low economic quality of life that an indigent person maintains," Wiseman said.

In January 2013, Atalig pleaded guilty to two counts of assault (domestic violence). Wiseman subsequently slapped him with a 40-day jail term that he already served in prison.

In May 2012, Wiseman suspended Atalig and attorney Reynaldo Yana from practicing law in the CNMI for refusing to return $1.1 million in attorneys' fees that the obtained from the Angel Malite estate.

TO COLLECT $632K JUDGMENT VS EX-ESTATE ADMINISTRATOR

US govt eyes Pelisamen's Fund benefits

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Luis Kaipat Pelisamen, a former estate administrator who was slapped with a five-year jail term in 2010 for his role in the unlawful use of estate funds, has up to now failed to pay his judgment amounting to $632,045.14, according to the U.S. government.

To collect the judgment, assistant U.S. attorney Jessica F. Cruz yesterday asked the U.S. District Court for the NMI to issue a writ of continuing garnishment upon the judgment entered against Pelisamen.

A writ of garnishment is a legal process which the court orders the garnishee to hold money or property owed within 10 days after the writ is served.

Garnishee refers to a person, entity, or corporation in possession of money or property of a defendant or judgment debtor.

In January 2010, U.S. District Court for the NMI then chief judge Alex Munson sentenced Pelisamen to 60 months in prison and ordered him to pay $625,775 in restitution to the Rita Kaipat estate, plus $500 in court assessment fee.

In the U.S. government's application for a writ of continuing garnishment, Cruz disclosed that as of March 21, 2013, there is a balance of $632,045.14 or $625,775 in restitution principal, $6,080.14 in restitution interest, and $190 in special assessment fee.

Cruz said demand for payment of the debt was made upon Pelisamen, but he has failed to pay.

The U.S. government lawyer said the garnishee, NMI Retirement Fund, is believed to have possession of property (including nonexempt disposable earnings) in which Pelisamen has a substantial nonexempt interest.

In June 2010, U.S. District Court for the NMI visiting judge Consuelo B. Marshall sentenced Pelisamen's co-defendant attorney Joseph Aldan Arriola to four years and 10 months in prison over his role in the stealing of over $600,000 from the Rita Kaipat estate.

The judge ordered Arriola and Pelisamen to jointly pay the estate $625,775.

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EDITORIAL

Political infighting threatens to paralyze Haiti's recovery

Sixteen months after Haiti was supposed to hold a critical round of elections, the voting procedure remains on hold. The country's warring political factions can't agree on a date or the membership of the panel that would supervise the process. Even the U.N. Security Council is reaching the end of its tether with Haiti's political leaders.

It's not as if the beleaguered Caribbean nation doesn't have enough problems.

Frequent tropical storms, a cholera epidemic, and an aid distribution process with multiple problems are a few of the reasons Haiti's post-earthquake recovery has failed to gain traction. There's plenty of blame to spread around for the glacial pace of progress.

But the political rivalries dividing President Michel Martelly and his Haitian adversaries threaten to paralyze the recovery. This affects every aspect of the post-earthquake process, from housing to job creation to crime control. The longer it endures, the more that those who want to help Haiti become frustrated.

The political impasse is the principal reason that progress in Haiti has been much slower to develop than the international community expected, according to Nigel Fisher, head of the U.N. agency that provides security and shepherds Haiti through the post-earthquake crisis.

He noted back in mid-February that the gridlock over elections is the most vexing issue.

It "dominates the discourse and crystallizes the disappointment of friends of Haiti today," Mr. Fisher said. Most investors, Mr. Fisher added, would deem Haiti "not yet" ready to move forward on the business front, openly questioning the Martelly government's boast that Haiti is "open for business."

Mr. Fisher also cast doubt on Haiti's justice system. Until investors are assured of an independent judiciary where ordinary business disputes can be resolved equitably, they'll keep their money in their pockets rather than risk it in Haiti's unsure business climate.

Mr. Fisher's scolding should have been a wake-up call for Mr. Martelly's government. Instead, the comments went unheeded. Nothing changed.

Enter the Security Council, which fired a warning shot last month that stopped just short of an ultimatum.

Comments from Mr. Fisher on the status of the U.N. mission in Haiti and critical remarks by members of the council amounted to a diplomatic version of reading Haiti the riot act. One after another, diplomats warned Haiti to quit stalling. One ambassador said that if elections are not held in 2013, "it will become ever more difficult for the international community to accept excuses and delays."

Translation: Those who control the purse strings on aid to Haiti are not willing to wait forever while irresponsible leaders engage in political infighting and neglect the business of government.

Earlier, legislators finally sent the names of three parliamentarians to sit on a nine-member electoral council that would break the political deadlock. But then, more political bickering broke out, ensuring longer delays.

Meanwhile, the lack of elections led to the replacement of 130 elected municipal governments by presidential appointees, while the mandate of one-third of Haiti's senators expired.

Haiti's politicians would be foolish to ignore the Security Council's warning. Aid providers should keep the pressure on Mr. Martelly and other political leaders until they show they are capable of making the compromises that are necessary to move the country forward.

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Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance

Saipan's news can be a little deflating sometimes. If you'd like to take a break from that stress, dig your toes in the sand with something to read, and re-zero your perspective, I'll mention a favorite old book.

It's called Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance. Written by Robert M. Pirsig, it was first published in 1974. It has since sold over 5 million copies. That's not a bad score for a book that was rejected by 121 publishers. But that cold shoulder from the suits in the publishing industry merely adds to the credibility of the book. It didn't fit into a tidy pigeon hole. It was too creative.

The book is a narrative that uses a motorcycle trip as a vessel for philosophy.

Yeah, that's right: motorcycles and philosophy.

Many ponderous, and not-so-ponderous, reviews of the book have been penned over the decades. I have nothing to add to that inventory.

So I'll just tell you how the book strikes my noggin and how I crossed paths with it.

My take is that it's about how we interact with stuff; it's about what goes into that interaction, including our own mind-set and values, and what comes out of that interaction.

I see it as an issue of not of right-and-wrong, but of cause-and-effect.

My introduction to the book came from my fellow pilots when I was a new-hire. Like motorcycle riders, pilots have a lot at stake when it comes to interacting with their machines.

Back then I used to fly rush-hour traffic watch duties for a couple of AM radio stations. During midday and on weekends I'd give helicopter rides and airplane lessons. There might be better ways to live, but I can't think of any.

Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance was a perfect mesh with that lifestyle, where every day was its own little adventure, and what you got out of it depended on what you put into it.

I used to recommend this book to some of my flight students. Some students were sloppy in their flight planning and ground preparations, as they'd just "go through the motions" instead of really paying attention to the details.

They liked the actual flying, of course. But there's more to the flight than the flying. Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance provided useful perspective on such matters.

Beyond the basic theme of the book there are a lot of conceptual wanderings, as befits a free-spirited motorcycle trip. Pirsig is a hands-on guy, not merely an academic chin-puller. His mixture of the practical with the philosophical makes for a useful combination.

By ED STEPHENS
Special to the Saipan Tribune

Visit Ed Stephens Jr. at EdStephensJr.com.
His column runs every Friday.

And he's a great story teller.

As you'll suspect from the "Zen" part of the title, some Eastern philosophy is on the menu here. Pirsig is an American who was stationed in peacetime Korea for his hitch in the Army. It was his experience in Korea that got him intrigued by Eastern philosophy, and at one point later he went to India to study.

Thanks to this book, Pirsig has fame and success. But his life was tragic in some ways. It's hard to imagine a guy enduring so much and coming out of it with any faculties in tact, let alone such impressive writing skills.

Most of my pals and I would put this book on our Top 10 list of all-time favorite books.

Although it's a narrative, it's not a box office blockbuster, good-vs.-evil fairy tale. The ending doesn't strike me as particularly happy. The protagonist is complex and not one-dimensionally sympathetic. And though there are some petty dweebs from academia to deal with, some of whom are bested, I don't perceive a grand villain who is slain by a conquering hero.

But this book tugs on a thread of very ancient, and time-tested, Chinese wisdom, running back to the Tao Te Ching of 2,400 years ago, which, in fact, provides the philosophical "ah ha!" moment in Pirsig's story.

Is the book "inspirational?" Sure; to the extent that the reader is happy dealing with reality.

For those who like to pull up a beach chair every Friday and join me here, I think most of you would enjoy Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance. Which is, of course, why I'm mentioning it. Drop me a line if you've already read the book, I'd like to know your take on it.

The book is not on the shelves at Saipan's Bestseller books. But they've advised me they can get a copy in two weeks for those who order it. I have a few recent paperback editions on my shelf, and they cost anywhere from $8 to $17, so the price is easy. The copy I've got at hand is 540 pages.

EDITORIAL POLICY Letters to the editor must include the NAME, VILLAGE ADDRESS, and CONTACT NUMBER of the contributor. Letters that do not have these information will immediately be trashed. Contributions consisting of 500 words or less have more chances of getting published. The *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to publish a contribution or not; the right to edit submissions for length, accuracy, and clarity; and the right to publish and distribute contributions in print, electronic, or other media formats. Submissions may be sent via snail mail to the 2nd Floor, JP Center, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, 96950; fax (670) 235-3740; e-mail to editor@saipantribune.com; or through our website at www.saipantribune.com.

Autism lit up a B

By JAIME R. VERGARA
Special to the Saipan Tribune

Jaime R. Vergara (jrvergarajr2031@aol.com) previously taught at San Vicente Elementary School on Saipan and is currently a guest lecturer at Shenyang Aerospace University in China.

It has now become a ritual. Each year, usually in April when it is declared an awareness month, we hunker down to a reflection on autism. It is particularly poignant this year as my J. Daniel turns 18 and his older sister Ma. Andrea by three years makes 21. The siblings live with their Mom in Ohio since she retired early from the State Department. Both were diagnosed with ASD (autism spectrum disorder) when we lived within the Washington, D.C. beltway. The enigma that autism is cost the family a marriage, and taxed many marriages as well, a pain we live through each time the subject of autism comes along.

At an earlier time, we championed the cause of making the general public and public services aware of the diagnosis and a human response to it. The incidence of autism has grown from an alarming 1 person per every 1,000 when we first got the alarm call, to now 1 child per every 80, all in 15 years. Meanwhile, we also watched Temple Grandin, PhD, evolve from horse whisperer to a movie icon.

As we have ignorantly devastated the earth in the last 50 years, with undeniable occurrences of climate change, it has now become evident that we have also messed up our body metabolism to the detriment of our neural connections and system.

For ASD, there is no known single cause or a similar effect on everyone. The diagnosis has become an umbrella to cover a multitude of neural disorders characterized by the symptoms of delayed or arrested language development, repetitive patterns of behavior, and non-interactive social indifference but intense auto behavioral preoccupation. Put another way, a child suddenly stops talking, displays behavior like lining up objects, and ignores everyone while clearly engrossed in one's self.

The organization Autism Speaks asked the Empire State building in NYC to light up their tower blue for the month's awareness on autism. The grand dame of skyscrapers complied. Blue seems to be the adopted color for the cause this year. I am still, however, partial to the "puzzle ribbon" of old.

For two decades in the '70s and '80s, we wore solid navy blue attire in solidarity to the blue-collar working class, as well as use the commonness of the color to mark our secular monastic garb, identifying a simple brand of spirituality (human awareness) in a scientific and urban world.

Ribbons and colors have now proliferated among many cause-oriented groups that keeping up with color emphases have become a mental challenge. The challenge must have faced President Obama and the White House staff when they came out with the timely BRAIN (Brain Research through Advancing Innovative Technologies) initiative.

JFK took us to a journey into outer space and the landing on the moon. We smashed the atom and in the process irreverently identified a God particle. Obama suggests that we map out the billion cells and the trillion connections in the brain, and in the process, shed light on such neural condition as autism, among others.

BRAIN aims to develop technology that can record the electrical activity of individual cells and complex neural circuits "at the speed of thought." Cute, neh? But the President is serious, and we are, too, as this represents a new frontier in the much talked about "inner space" journey as compared to the one on "outer space".

In the President's words: "As humans we can identify galaxies light-years away. We can study particles smaller than an atom, but we still haven't unlocked the mystery of the three pounds of matter that sits between our ears."

The last time I saw Daniel and Andrea was five years ago. Whatever description they have of their sense experiences so far, expression of feelings, articulation of thoughts, and the formulation of plans, they keep to themselves. Verbal output is minimal; behavioral outbursts are pharmacologically managed. And I am called simply as "father." Any literally product, if any, might be in their computers' database. Their laptops have become the "other" in their relational lives.

As numerically huge the count has become on autism, we tend to focus on the forest rather than the trees. For good reason since our tendency towards denial on the unpleasantness of life is monumental. We are better at the blame game rather than the celebration of the awesomely different in our midst.

I do not have, in the first instance, autistic kids. I have Daniel and Andrea. They are individuals, not unlike others I have met with names like Nicolas and Larissa, Alyssa and Aliiloa, Mark and Maria. They are as varied as humanity itself, unique and unrepeatable human individuals, the likes of which has never been seen before nor will one ever be the same again. They are deserving first and foremost of our love and affection, and secondarily, if at all, needing of the anxiety-laden frenzy for a cure, on the one hand, or subjected to the crazed clamor for civil rights claims, on the other.

I am wearing a light blue ribbon this month while scanning Daniel and Andrea's children photos from my long neglected collection of 35mm negs and positives. Once in a while, I nod a TY to President Obama. He lit up the B!

Roar of revenue streams gone silent

By JOHN S. DELROSARIO JR.
Special to the Saipan Tribune

John DelRosario Jr. is a former publisher of Saipan Tribune *and a former secretary of Department of Public Lands.*

The powerful roar of revenue streams of yester-years have quieted down, significantly. The once raucous rush downstream is no longer audible. Even the size of the water flow has subsided to mini-streams.

My feet no longer gets wet no matter how close I sit next to the Talofofo' riverbank. It's lost is luster. Is there a message in the dead eerie silence of teeny water streams? Not sure what to make of it, but it definitely is very troubling.

You take an ocular review of debts versus revenue in hopes of seeing something significantly positive. Sadly, the former piles up quickly while the latter contracts equally quickly, too. Insanity kicks-in as you juggle the same figures hoping for different results. It's a tough cookie to chew all the way around.

It's no boon for leadership when viewed from a realistic standpoint but a bane that will eventually boil down to making very unpopular decisions to cut spending.

The dire fiscal colossus demonstrates the monstrosity that leaves policymakers dazed and disoriented at the beastly nature of the creature. Where does the job begin on economic revival under disastrous economic conditions revenue streams degenerating quicker than finding substitutes?

It seems that the quick fix benchmark is to resort to tax increases convinced the NMI could tax is way to wealth. Really? Won't this paradigm exact the complete opposite, therefore, delusional in all its trappings?

If in the midst of the deepening economic disaster coupled by more businesses putting on shutters, isn't this a glaring lesson to recalibrate paradigms in how the NMI revives economic cataclysm? Would imposing greater hardship on top of prohibitive utility cost encourage business expansion or more contraction? Have you factored-in the dire effects of Obamacare and its implications on small businesses? Is this the way to unshackle a "no growth" economy?

Ad Hoc planning, if you could insert the term "planning," must cease however difficult or cataclysmic economic conditions may be. It's better to return to the drawing board to critically review regressive policies against investments with the view to repealing or improving upon them. The arbitrary imposition of more taxes isn't going to cut the cake either. It's perfect recipe to slamming the brakes on realistic recovery.

With cumulative debts marching towards the billion-dollar mark, is the NMI equipped with the fiscal wherewithal to begin paying money ($375 million) owed the Fund? Add some $80 million for PSS and CHC and another $80 million for other agencies. No wonder the roar of revenue streams has turned into a distant echo.

Fund's steady march to bankruptcy

Too, the steady march towards the total insolvency or bankruptcy of the Fund requires serious ocular review and its implications on other components of the local economy.

With about a year left before it goes broke or belly-up, are there contingency plans how to ensure its continued funding even if it requires miraculous concoction of so-called "corresponding contribution" so retirees receive their loot?

Just imagine if all 4,000 retirees no longer receive their pension. It means the instant inability to meet obligatory familial needs, including the longest and loudest mea culpa in front of CUC for not being able to pay. Give it time and we shall all see the steady power brownouts prompted by the lack of funds to buy fossil fuel. I don't know Maria!

Grocery store revenues would drop significantly. Even the hallways at CHC would turn silent as patients decide to stay home for lack of funds to pay for healthcare and expensive medication. I mean the implications of the Fund going broke are too big to ignore, not too big to fail. Now, this is where real leadership is put to the test. Please show us you can lead!

■ ■ ■

Tradition V. Money

Historically, our friends from Yap know how to make money by carving large stones and ferrying them across the Pacific in their traditional canoes for trade purposes. They have since discontinued such traditional mode of money making.

These days money is rolling up their shores.

A Chinese real-estate developer—proposes $1-billion 4,000-room hotel/casino/golf resort. The issue has triggered a division in the community. Some hold on to fully thought-out progress at a pace hailing from the community versus others who wish to replicate tourism industry among nearby islands.

While they debate gains and losses under a huge investment proposal, there's the world's most expensive club in Singapore called Pangaea.

"The Pangaea experience replicates the feeling of being at a house party—one that just happens to offer African tribal masks from Ault's personal collection, throbbing music, a $26,000 cocktail that contains a diamond inside and is served by waitresses in black dresses, and the knowledge that many of the people around you are worth billions, according to a recent *WSJ* article.

"Pangaea, though just over a year old, is now considered the most profitable club in the world with revenues of more than $100,000 per night in recent months, Michael Ault, owner, says.

"Over the past decade, Singapore has undergone a dramatic makeover, as the rich and famous from Asia and beyond debarks on its shores in search of a glamorous new home—and one of the safest places to park their wealth. Would they ever consider the NMI as a prospect to place their wealth?

■ ■ ■

Indeed, the resignation of the former governor instantly took out the wind of excitement on impeachment. It also quickly created a lull where all policymakers had to return to square one to deal with ghostly two-headed snakes that refuse to leave with tidal shifts.

But dealing with them is a must with the view to providing lasting answers to such issues as the impending insolvency of the Fund, the fiscal needs of CHC, PSS, DPS and matching funds for Medicaid. The costs of these programs skyrocket while revenue generation heads south. Mind numbing!

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam Homepage: www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/

The Weather

5-Day Forecast for Saipan and Tinian

TODAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY
Mostly clear with a slight chance of showers. East winds 5 to 15 mph.	Mostly clear with a slight chance of showers. East winds 5 to 15 mph.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.
▲88° ▼76°	▲88° ▼77°	▲86° ▼77°	▲87° ▼76°	▲87° ▼76°

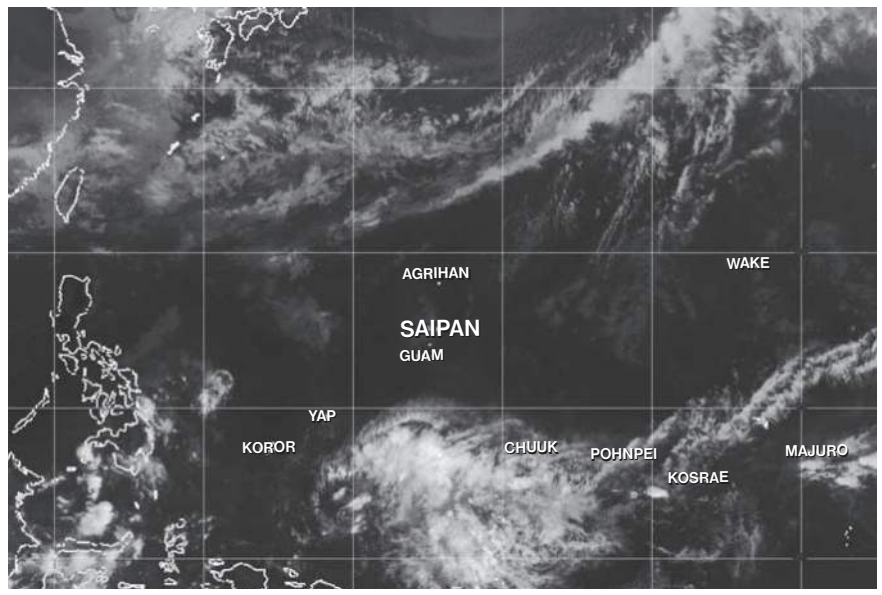
Micronesia

Guam and Rota	Partly Cloudy	▲87	▼79
Palau	Thunderstorms	▲87	▼78
Yap	Showers	▲89	▼77
Chuuk	Showers	▲84	▼79
Pohnpei	Showers	▲86	▼80
Kosrae	Showers	▲86	▼80
Majuro	Thunderstorms	▲85	▼80

Around The Globe

Auckland	Sunny	▲68	▼57
Beijing	Sunny	▲58	▼33
Hong Kong	Showers	▲68	▼61
Honolulu	Partly Cloudy	▲81	▼71
London	Cloudy	▲45	▼33
Los Angeles	Mostly Sunny	▲69	▼56
Manila	Partly Cloudy	▲92	▼82
Melbourne	Mostly Sunny	▲79	▼56
Miami	Thundershowers	▲80	▼61
New York	Partly Cloudy	▲57	▼36
Osaka	Showers	▲65	▼54
Paris	Cloudy	▲48	▼36
Pusan	Showers	▲64	▼42
Rome	Showers	▲59	▼49
Salem	Showers	▲55	▼47
San Francisco	Showers	▲60	▼54
Seoul	Showers	▲53	▼36
Tokyo	Showers	▲65	▼61
Washington, DC	Showers	▲64	▼40

Yesterday's Satellite Image



PICTURE TIME: 1:00PM, THURSDAY, APRIL 4, 2013
Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

A cold front extends southwestward from near Minami Tori Shima at 25N151E to end near 19N133E. Cloudiness and patchy rain are found along and up to 150 miles northwest of the front. A trade-wind disturbance located southeast of Yap and south of Chuuk is generating scattered showers and isolated thunderstorms south of a line from 6N138E to 8N143E to 6N153E. Trade-wind convergence is producing scattered showers and isolated thunderstorms near Majuro between 4N and 9N from 169E to the date line.

Tides

Saipan Harbor

5:17 AM	Today	High Tide:	1.8 Feet
11:01 AM	Today	Low Tide:	1.0 Feet
4:02 PM	Today	High Tide:	1.6 Feet
11:09 PM	Today	Low Tide:	0.1 Feet

Sunrise/Sunset

Today	6:10 AM	6:30 PM
Saturday	6:09 AM	6:30 PM
Sunday	6:08 AM	6:30 PM
Monday	6:08 AM	6:30 PM
Tuesday	6:07 AM	6:30 PM

Moonrise/Moonset

Today	2:02 AM	1:57 PM
Saturday	2:50 AM	2:53 PM
Sunday	3:34 AM	3:47 PM
Monday	4:17 AM	4:39 PM
Tuesday	4:59 AM	5:31 PM

FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF APRIL 4, 2013

DEPARTURES

SAIPAN-GUAM (GUM)

UA5070	4:35am	5:25am	2, 4, 6, 7
UA5062	4:50am	5:40am	1, 3, 5
UA5068	8:35am	9:25am	Daily
UA5074	11:20am	12:10pm	1, 4, 5, 7
UA5076	3:10pm	4:00pm	Daily
UA5078	6:55pm	7:45pm	Daily
UA5072	9:45pm	10:35pm	Daily

SAIPAN-NARITA (NRT)

DL287	6:05am	8:45am	Daily
DL297	4:30pm	7:25pm	Daily

SAIPAN-BUSAN (PUS)

0Z608	3:10am	6:20am	1, 4, 5, 7

SAIPAN-SEOUL (ICN)

0Z606	2:20am	6:00am	1
0Z606	2:50am	6:30am	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7
0Z604	3:30pm	6:55pm	Daily

SAIPAN-SHANGHAI (PVG)

3U8648	6:10am	8:40am	1, 4, 5, 7

SAIPAN-BEIJING (PEK)

MU764	4:10am	8:00am	1, 5

SAIPAN-GUANZHOU (CAN)

3U8646	4:20am	7:30am	2, 6

SAIPAN-KHABAROVSK (KHV)

SYL9950	6:40pm	1:30am+1	7

SAIPAN-MANILA (MNL)

0Z606/701	2:20am	11:05am	1 via ICN
0Z606/701	2:50am	11:05am	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 via ICN
UA5070/191	4:35am	9:55am	6 via GUM
UA5062/191	4:50am	9:55am	3 via GUM
DL287/173	6:05am	10:20pm	Daily via NRT
UA5068/PR111	8:35am	4:35pm	1, 3, 5, 6, 7 via GUM
US5074/PR111	11:20am	4:35pm	1, 5, 7 via GUM
UA5076/183	3:10pm	8:45pm	2, 5 via GUM
UA5076/183	3:10pm	8:50pm	1, 3, 4, 6, 7 via GUM
0Z604/703	3:30pm	10:45pm	Daily via ICN

SAIPAN-HONG KONG (HKG)

0Z606/721	2:20am	11:50am	1 via ICN
0Z606/721	2:50am	11:50am	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 via ICN
UA5076/147	3:10pm	9:50pm	1, 3, 5, 6 via GUM
0Z604/745	3:30pm	10:40pm	Daily via ICN

ARRIVALS

GUAM (GUM)-SAIPAN

UA 5069	2:45am	3:35am	2, 4, 6, 7
UA5071	7:15am	8:05am	Daily
UA5073	10:00am	10:50am	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7
UA5075	1:45pm	2:35pm	1, 4, 5, 7
UA5077	5:35pm	6:25pm	Daily
UA5079	8:20pm	9:10pm	Daily

ROTA (ROP)-SAIPAN

UA5062	3:45am	4:20am	1, 5
UA5038	11:15am	11:50am	6

NARITA (NRT)-SAIPAN

DL298	10:25am	3:05pm	Daily
DL288	8:15pm	12:45am+1	Daily

BUSAN (PUS)-SAIPAN

0Z607	9:05pm	1:55am+1	3, 4, 6, 7

SEOUL (ICN)-SAIPAN

0Z603	8:50am	2:20pm	Daily
0Z605	8:10pm	1:40am+1	7
0Z605	8:15pm	1:45am+1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6

SHANGHAI (PVG)-SAIPAN

3U8647	10:40pm	5:00am+1	1, 4, 6, 7

BEIJING (PEK)-SAIPAN

MU763	7:55pm	3:10am+1	4, 7

GUANZHOU (CAN)-SAIPAN

3U8645	7:40pm	3:00am+1	1, 5

KHABAROVSK (KHV)-SAIPAN

SYL9949	12:45pm	5:20pm	7

MANILA (MNL)-SAIPAN

PR110/UA5072	7:55am	6:25pm	1, 3, 5, 6, 7 via GUM
DL172/288	8:05am	12:45am+1	Daily via NRT
UA190/5077	10:55am	6:25pm	3, 6 via GUM
UA190/5079	10:55am	9:10pm	3, 6 via GUM
0Z702/605	12:15pm	1:40am+1	7 via ICN
0Z702/605	12:15pm	1:45am+1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 via ICN
UA184/5071	10:55pm	8:05am+1	1, 3, 4, 6, 7 via GUM
0Z704/603	11:45pm	2:20pm	Daily via ICN
UA184/5071	11:35pm	8:05am+1	2, 5 via GUM

HONG KONG (HKG)-SAIPAN

0Z746/603	12:30am	2:20pm	Daily via ICN
0Z722/605	1:10pm	1:45am+1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 via ICN
UA180/5071	10:45pm	8:05am+1	1, 5 via GUM
UA180/5071	10:50pm	8:05am+1	3, 6 GUM

LEGEND: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); 3U: Sichuan Airlines; MU: China Eastern; UA: United Airlines; DL: Delta Airlines; OZ: Asiana; VLK: Vladivostok Air; SYL: Yakutia Air.

ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. The *Saipan Tribune* is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)

FREEDOM AIR FLIGHT SCHEDULE

Airline	ETD	ETA	Frequency
Guam–Rota			
FRE 100	7:30	8:00	Daily
Rota–Saipan			
FRE 100	8:20	8:50	Daily
Guam–Rota			
FRE 300	17:00	17:30	Daily
Rota–Saipan	17:50	18:20	Daily
Saipan–Rota			
FRE 200	9:30	10:00	Daily
Rota–Guam	10:20	10:45	Daily
Saipan–Rota			
FRE 400	18:55	19:25	Daily
Rota–Guam			
FRE 400	19:40	20:10	Daily
Saipan–Tinian			
FRE 101	6:45	6:55	Daily
FRE 103	7:30	7:40	Daily
FRE 105	8:00	8:10	Daily
FRE 107	8:40	8:50	Daily
FRE 109	9:10	9:20	Daily
FRE 111	10:45	10:55	Daily

Airline	ETD	ETA	Frequency
FRE 115	13:00	13:10	Daily
FRE 117	14:30	14:40	Daily
FRE 119	16:00	16:10	Daily
FRE 121	16:40	16:50	Daily
FRE 123	17:40	17:50	Daily
FRE 125	18:30	18:40	Daily
Tinian–Saipan			
FRE 102	7:05	7:15	Daily
FRE 104	7:50	8:00	Daily
FRE 106	8:20	8:30	Daily
FRE 108	9:00	9:10	Daily
FRE 110	10:00	10:10	Daily
FRE 112	11:05	11:15	Daily
FRE 114	12:00	12:10	Daily
FRE 116	13:30	13:40	Daily
FRE 118	14:50	15:00	Daily
FRE 120	16:20	16:30	Daily
FRE 122	17:00	17:10	Daily
FRE 124	18:05	18:15	Daily
FRE 126	18:50	19:00	Daily

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  Pictures from the islands' Filipino community, primarily focusing on Filipino activities, gatherings, get-togethers, volunteer work, etc.
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  Announcements of upcoming activities of organizations, community clubs, government agencies, and private companies.
- CAMPUS BULLETIN
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For pictures:

- Photos should be original and not copyrighted. Contributors must have the right to allow the *Saipan Tribune* to publish the pictures.
- Digital pictures should be high-resolution (minimum of 800kb).
- Must have complete details (who, what, where, when), the name of contact person, and phone number.
- Photos must have been taken in the last two months.
- For birthday greetings, must be submitted no later than 12 noon of the previous day to make it to next day's edition.

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- Fax: (670) 235-3740
- Mail: PMB 34, P.O. Box 10001, Saipan, CNMI 96950
- Drop off: 2nd Floor, JP Center, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan
  To check if contributions are received, call (670) 235-6397, 235-2440, 235-8747

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Anonymous tips can now be submitted through the following:

- Call 234-7272 (PARA) on any telephone
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- Log on to the internet at www.nmicrimestoppers.com

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DEQ to lose $420K in EPA grants as a result of sequestration

By CLARISSA V. DAVID
clarissa_david@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The CNMI Division of Environmental Quality stands to lose some $420,000 out of the consolidated grant it receives from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency as a result of the automatic spending cuts at the national level.

This consolidated grant covers various programs, including those that fall under the Clean Air Act and the Safe Drinking Water Act, according to DEQ director Frank Rabauliman.

He said in an interview that the EPA Region 9 Pacific Islands Office confirmed in a letter late March the sequestration impact in the Northern Marianas.

According to Rabauliman, the 5-percent cut in the EPA consolidated grant also covers the amount received by the Commonwealth Utilities Corp, which collects the "lion's share" of the funding at around $7 million.

Still, Rabauliman said, $420,000 is a "significant" figure given that EPA is their biggest funding source.

CLARISSA V. DAVID

Division of Environmental Quality director Frank Rabauliman, left, delivers his remarks on April 2 during the proclamation signing ceremony designating April as Environmental Awareness Month and April 22 as CNMI Earth Day. With him are Lt. Gov. Jude U. Hofschneider and Environmental Awareness Month Committee chair Avra Heller.

"But we are mindful on how we do spending," he told *Saipan Tribune*. "Luckily, the cuts are not that deep to affect the implementation of programs and the work we do."

With the mandatory budget cuts, Rabauliman noted that DEQ will have to prioritize in spending its limited funding for the agency's programs and activities to mitigate the impact of sequestration.

"It's simply a tightening of the belt and I like to see that implemented across the board. Not knowing what's going to happen in the next fiscal year, if we start doing it now, it will probably be not as impactful next fiscal year," he said.

Rabauliman said DEQ also receives grants from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Office of Insular Affairs through the Coral Reef Initiative, and the Department of Transportation.

Except for the OIA grant, all of DEQ's funding sources are impacted by sequestration. While DEQ's biggest contributor is EPA, it receives "very limited" funding from DOT compared to other grantor agencies, added Rabauliman.

Decaying trees along Beach Road to be removed soon

The Saipan Mayor's Office and the CNMI Forestry target to begin work on decaying trees along Beach Road in the coming weeks.

As this developed, the mayor's special adviser Henry Hofschneider reiterated the need to purchase the bucket truck needed for the task and other services that the office provides to the community.

Hofschneider and Mayor Donald G. Flores yesterday met with state forester Vic Deleon Guerrero Jr. who expressed his commitment to collaborate with the Mayor's Office on the issue.

Flores said the Forestry Office has done several surveys on trees along Beach Road from the Microl Toyota intersection heading north.

All surveys reportedly showed that most trees should either be pruned or totally removed because of their decaying state, according to Flores.

"This raises concern on public safety so we will continue to seek the support of the local delegation to grant our request for the purchase of the bucket truck," he told *Saipan Tribune*.

Flores revealed that they initially made the request to the 17th Legislature, adding that they plan to follow up on the request with the current 18th Legislature.

Hofschneider, for his part, said that they already wrote to and met with lawmakers as well as attended sessions, all in an effort to put emphasis on their request.

He maintained that $40,000 is available for their request. "It's just a matter of prioritizing," added Hofschneider.

The mayor's adviser added that once the rotting trees are knocked down, the Mayor's Office plans to replace them through a re-planting initiative. ***(Clarissa V. David)***

COMMUNITY BRIEFS

Kagman Community Health Center

The grand opening ceremony for the KCHC is slated for this Friday, April 5, 2013 at 10am in Kagman II. A short tour of the facility will be done after the ribbon cutting. The community is welcome and encouraged to attend.

KCHC is primary care facility that serves all patients regardless of inability to pay. Everyone is welcome to be seen, even those who reside outside the Kagman area.

To make an appointment or more information, call 256-5242 (KCHC) from 8am to 4:30pm, Monday through Friday (except holidays). Additional information is available by our website www.kagmanchc.org. ***(PR)***

MHS Class of 1983 meeting

The Marianas High School Class of 1983 would like to invite everyone to join us on our general meeting on Friday, April 26, at the Minachom Atdao Pavilion in Susupe/Civic Center at 7pm.

For more information or inquiry, please give a call to Tonnei Camacho at 483-9665. ***(PR)***

MHS allowing late orders of graduation items

Marianas High School is now allowing late orders for graduation items (cap, gown, tassel, diploma, and cover) until April 5, 2013, 1pm. Those interested must pay at least half of the total amount they are ordering. MHS said this is the last and final order for all graduation materials. Orders will be placed on April 5, 2013, but there is no guarantee that the items will arrive on time.

If you have any questions, call the Main Office at 237-3206. ***(PR)***

SSHS has new email

Saipan Southern High School has a new email address, which is saipansouthern@gmail.com. The school uses this email to keep close contact with the school's parents and alumni. ***(PR)***

FREE TRAINING COURSES!

CULTURA ATHLETICS, LLC

Cultura Athletics, LLC under a sub-award grant issued to the Marianas Resource Conservation & Development Council is able to provide the follow courses free of charge to U.S. eligible workers. Some courses also qualify for professional development credit with the CNMI Public School System.

BASKETBALL COURSES (Ada Gym)

Basketball Coaching Level 1		6:00pm-9:00pm	(5 Days)	April 08 - 13, 2013
Basketball 101	(@Tinian Gym)	4:00pm-7:00pm	(3 Days)	April 19, 2013
		8:00am-5:00pm		April 20, 2013
		10:00am-2:00pm		April 21, 2013

*To register for these courses and other info, please contact (670) 235-1775 or email: eli_rang@yahoo.com

Scoretable Officials	4:30pm-8:30pm	(3 Days)	April 9, 11, 13, 2013
Level "O"/1 Basketball Referee	4:30pm-8:30pm	(6 Days)	April 15 - 19, 2013
	8:30am-6:30pm		April 20, 2013

*To register for these courses and other info, please contact (670) 234-8604 or email: 731ekul@gmail.com
* Venue To be determined (TBD)

VOLLEYBALL COURSES

Coaching Mini Volleyball **For Elementary Schools*	8:30am-2:30pm	(Daily)	April 9 - 12, 2013
Coaching Volleyball for Beginners **For Junior High Schools*	8:30am-2:30pm	(Daily)	April 15 - 19, 2013

Indoor Referee	(Session 1)	4:30pm-8:30pm	(2 Days)	April 10 & 12, 2013
	(Session 2)	4:30pm-8:30pm	(2 Days)	April 23 & 25, 2013

*To register for these courses and other info, please contact (670) 234-8604 or email: 731ekul@gmail.com
* Venue To be determined (TBD)

ATHLETICS COURSES (Tinian High School Track & Field)

Intro to Athletics	4:00pm-8:00pm	(3 Days)	April 26, 2013
	8:00am-5:00pm		April 27, 2013
	10:00am-2:00pm		April 28, 2013

*To register for this course and other info, please contact (670) 235-1775 or email: eli_rang@yahoo.com

"This program is supported by federal funds in the amount of $145,000.00 under the U.S. Department of Interior, Office of Insular Affairs, CNMI Economic and Labor Enhancement Program through a Sub-grant award from the CNMI Department of Commerce."

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Parents invited to Summer Academy info session

Parents of high school seniors and juniors are invited to participate in an information session on April 10 or 20, 2013 to learn about the Summer Academy organized by College Access Challenge Grant Program at the Northern Marianas College.

The Summer Academy affords high school students an opportunity to gain meaningful college experience while they are earning transferable college credits. The Academy familiarizes students with college life while they are still in high school and can be an excellent way to help students prepare for their eventual transition to college after graduation.

In addition to college level work, participants of the Summer Academy will also receive college advising, academic tutoring, and college-preparatory and life skills training.

The program is fully funded by the College Access Challenge Grant, which aims to increase the number of underserved and minority students who are enrolling in College. To do this, the CACG provides a scholarship award of $800 to eligible students to cover the cost of their courses.

The info session for parents will be held on two different dates: April 10, 2013 from 5pm to 8pm and on April 20, 2013 from 9am to 12pm. Both sessions will be at NMC's Student Center. Parents of high school seniors and juniors are strongly encouraged to participate and to meet with representatives of the CACG program to learn more about the Summer Academy.

The agenda for the sessions will include a discussion of the Summer Academy Experience, the early admissions process, financial aid opportunities, and other important topics.

The Summer Academy for students will run from June 28, 2013 through Aug. 12, 2013. Although classes for the Summer Academy will be held at NMC's As Terlaje campus, some activities will be located off-campus and will be announced in advance. Eligibility for participation in the Summer Academy is based on low-income status and English placement level. Participation is determined on a first-come, first-served basis.

For more information about the info session for parents or the Summer Academy for students, contact Hedwig Hofschneider at 234-5498 ext 1346 or email cacg@nmcnet.edu. ***(NMC)***

UOG CIS presents 'Green Dream Home' competition

The University of Guam Center for Island Sustainability (CIS) will be holding its second annual Green Dream Home High School Competition on Saturday, April 6, from 10am to 4pm at the Agana Shopping Center.

This year the Green Dream Competition features 11 high schools including public, private, and DODEA schools. The student teams will be building models and presenting their ideas on what makes a sustainable, energy-efficient home in Guam. The winners of the competition will also present their hard work at the annual UOG Island Sustainability Conference on April 17-19 at the Hyatt Regency Guam.

"Our goal with this competition is to get the island's young minds really thinking about alternatives for energy and building materials and incorporating a sustainable lifestyle," said Francisco Palacios, UOG CIS Energy technician. "They should be preparing for a 'green' future."

The Green Dream Home competition is open to the public from 10am to 2pm, on Saturday, April 6 at the Agana Shopping Center. Judging takes place at 2:30pm.

For more information please contact Elvie Tyler or Francisco Palacios at the UOG CIS office at 734-0478. To view last year's Green Dream Home models, visit www.uog.edu. ***(UOG)***

CANDLELIGHT VIGIL CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

The families of Soldiers of the 1st Battalion 294th Infantry Regiment, Guam Army National Guard (GUARNG) from the CNMI will be holding a Candlelight Vigil to offer prayers and support for our soldiers as they embark onto their journey to Afghanistan. The event will held on Friday, April 12, 2013 at the Pedro P. Tenorio Multi-Purpose Center in Susupe, Saipan from 8pm to 9:15pm. Special Mass will be offered at the Mt. Carmel Cathedral in Chalan Kanoa, Saipan at 6pm.

Environmental issues on *Marianas Agupa*

Marianas Agupa will feature Joe Kaipat from the Division of Environmental Quality to talk about Environmental Awareness Month this Saturday, April 6, 2013 between 10am and 10:15am.

Listeners on Saipan, Tinian, and Rota and those listening via streaming are encouraged to call in and ask questions during the show. Direct to studio at 234-5929 or use marianas agupa facebook account via instant messaging.

The Chamorro Radio Talk Show Program is hosted by Glenn H. Manglona. Featured reports are as follows—world report and program review by former mayor Joseph S. Inos. A special segment reports from Rota with correspondent and commentator Thomas D. Mendiola, from Tinian by correspondent and radio commentator with former senator David M. Cing, special report on land and culture with former secretary of Public Lands, John DelRosario Jr. and a village report from Antonio R. Cabrera, aka Antonion Amerikano, former secretary of Finance. A Simultaneous Internet via www.magic100radio.com will be available. For more information, contact Glenn @ 287-4536.

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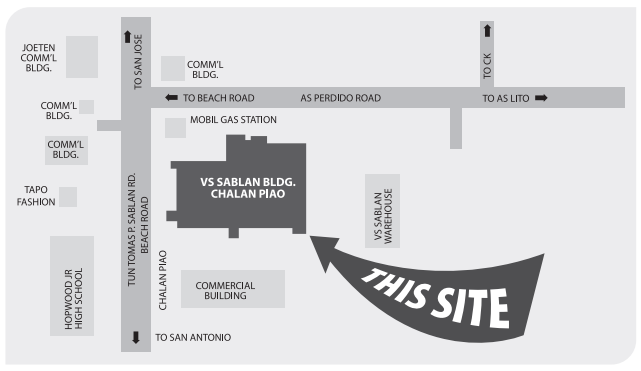

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SBDC offers new loan program for farmers

From left, Perry A. Inos Jr. , CNMI SBDC director; Fred A. San Nicolas, assistant manager, Farm Loan Program, USDA-FSAA; and Ivan A. Blanco, Commerce deputy secretary

Gov. Eloy S. Inos and Lt. Gov. Jude U. Hofshneider, through the Department of Commerce's CNMI Small Business Development Center (SBDC) in partnership with USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) are pleased to announce loan opportunities for farming related activities.

According to FSA assistant manager Fred A. San Nicolas, "The new Microloan (ML) Program has less stringent managerial experience and income verification requirements, along with a simpler loan application for operating loans up to $35,000. The ML application is streamlined, but FSA's mission is to help individuals become successful agriculture business owners, and so we like to let people know they must have a solid business proposal and meet FSA eligibility, repayment and collateral requirements."

CNMI SBDC director Perry A. Inos Jr., commented, "The CNMI SBDC is able to provide technical assistance for business planning through one-on-one consulting with prospective FSA applicants."

Commerce deputy secretary Ivan A. Blanco added, "These types of opportunities are a breath of fresh air for our local entrepreneurs. The administration, through Commerce Secretary Sixto Igisomar, continues to support these types of programs with the partnership of our Small Business Development (SBDC) office to assist the commercial and family size farms. I also applaud the initiative by the USDA-FSA to provide these types of opportunities for those already in the farming sector and those interested in farming."

This program complements USDA FSA's Operational Loan Program that is also available. Such farm activities include start up costs and operational costs for family sized farms and commercial farms for purchases of livestock, agricultural products, machinery, seedlings, etc.

For further information, please visit the USDA-FSA website at: http://www.fsa.usda.gov/FSA/webapp?area=home&subject=landing&topic=landing.

In addition, you may contact director Inos at the CNMI SBDC at 664-3018 or perry@pacificsbdc.com as well as Fred A. San Nicolas at fred.sannicolas@pb.usda.gov. ***(Office of the Governor)***

Forestry giving away plants to households

The CNMI Department of Lands and Natural Resources along with the Division of Agriculture's CNMI Forestry and its Advisory Council are issuing two free plants per household as part of Environmental Awareness Month.

The CNMI Forestry program is federally funded under the U.S. Forest Service, Region 5. Issuing out free plants is part of the grant objectives to promote healthy environment.

Individuals interested in obtaining two free plants per household should visit the CNMI Forestry Office, in the Division of Agriculture/ Kagman Station to obtain the plants. Groups interested in conducting bigger planting event(s) can submit a letter to the CNMI Forestry Office to obtain the number of plants they need. Application for plant assistance is available at www.cnmiforestry.gov.mp

In previous years, CNMI Forestry Office has issued free plants during Arbor month, traditionally held in October. However, this tradition continues everyday throughout the year. Therefore, the CNMI Forestry Section continues to actively assist groups and/or individuals in proper planting methods between tree/plant/ shrub species to enhance proper growth.

For more information on the free plants or the services that the CNMI Forestry provides, contact the Division of Agriculture—CNMI Forestry at 256-3320 or 256-3321 and ask for James Babauta, Benjamin Cepeda, or Susana Deleon Guerrero. ***(PR)***

BAPTISM PARTY CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

A baptismal party was held for Kailana King last April 3 at JC Café on Tinian. In photo with Kailana are her parents Kim King and Monika Diaz.

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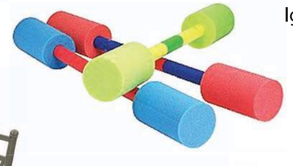

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WIA prepares for youth summer training

The Workforce Investment Agency has begun preparations for the upcoming 2013 Summer Youth Employment and Training Program. Applications can be downloaded at www.wia.gov.mp. Application copies will also be delivered to Hopwood Junior High School, Marianas High School, Saipan Southern High School, Oceanview Junior High School, Kagman High School, and the Tinian and Rota Mayor Offices.

Summer employment qualifications are not based on the application submission date, but on priority index ranking (PIR) based on age, income, federal statutory and state recognized applicant barriers and program rules and regulations. The higher the PIR, the more qualified the individual will be under WIA's youth funding program.

WIA is providing sufficient time for parents and applicants to gather all the required documents, read, follow instructions and answer the application clearly and legibly, as well as affix all required signatures on the applications. This year's summer program is expected to qualify CNMI wide a total of 300+/- youth participants working for a period of 4 weeks beginning July 1-26, 2013 1st phase and July 29-Aug. 23, 2013 for the 2nd phase (Saipan only) should placement slots prove insufficient during the 1st phase. Due to limited funding and in the interest of accommodating others that are wait-listed, WIA reserves the right to replace trainees for any reason as soon as their slots become available and will not allow interchanging of phase schedules for trainees that can't hold their initial placement schedule. If additional funding is realized then more qualifying youths will be given the opportunity to participate in the summer program and will be published accordingly.

Names and schedules will be published the week of June 17, 2013 in the local papers and WIA's website at www.wia.gov.mp. Work readiness workshops are scheduled for June 24-26, 2013 (Saipan), June 27, 2013 (Tinian), and June 28, 2013 (Rota). All summer qualifiers are required to attend the workshops. Application deadlines are May 14, 2013 (Rota), May 17, 2013 (Tinian), and May 31, 2013 (Saipan). Incomplete applications will not be accepted nor certified. ***(PR)***

GCA students nab 7 gold medals in NFL

Five out of the 16 members of the CNMI team that will compete at the National Forensic League this year are from Grace Christian Academy.

GCA's five gold medalists won a total of seven gold medals at the NFL regional competition held last March 15-16 at Marianas High School.

As gold medalists, they will join the CNMI team to represent the islands in the NFL national competition to be held on June 16-20, 2013, in Birmingham, Alabama.

Angela Mamaril, a veteran and this is her last year to compete, will represent the islands in the U.S. Extemporaneous Speech. She also won another gold medal in Commentary. Jimaela Ham, a senior also won two gold medals in Duo Interpretation and Storytelling. Ham and Rebekah Kim, a freshman, will compete in Duo Interpretation. Terence Ho, a senior will be the contender for Impromptu Speech. This is his second time to represent the CNMI for the same event. Dong Ha Lee, a sophomore will represent the CNMI for Poetry Reading.

NFL coordinator Ami Joy Danganan is very thankful for the talents and dedication shown by each competitor as well as the support given by the parents and volunteer judges. The GCA administration, faculty and staff, and parents are very proud for each student who works hard in this competition.

Organized by the National Forensic Board and supported by the CNMI Public school system; NFL competitions encouraged public and private school students to participate in and become proficient in the forensic arts: reading, debate, public speaking, and interpretations.

Right is the list of the individual awards in different events. ***(PR)***

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Grace Christian Academy students Angela Faith Mamaril, Jimaela Ham, Rebekah Kim, and Dong Ha Lee who won in the recent National Forensic League competition pose for a group photo. Not in photo is Terence Ho.

Commentary
Angela Faith Mamaril, 1st Place

Duo Interpretation
Jimaela Ham, 1st Place
Rebekah Kim, 1st Place
Dong Ha Lee, 2nd Place
Terence Ho, 2nd Place

Impromptu Speech
Terence Ho, 1st Place

Poetry Reading
Dong Ha Lee, 1st Place
Jimaela Ham, 4th Place

Story Telling
Jimaela Ham, 1st Place
Dong Ha Lee, 3rd Place

US Extemporaneous Speech
Angela Mamaril, 1st Place

Dramatic Interpretation
Rebekah Kim, 2nd Place

Humorous Interpretation
Terence Ho, 2nd Place

Prose Reading
Terence Ho, 3rd Place

DLNR and DFW to review CNMI's nearshore fisheries

The CNMI's Department of Lands and Natural Resources and Division of Fish and Wildlife recently announced that they will be reviewing the status of the CNMI's nearshore fisheries through the formation of a Fisheries Assessment Committee.

The committee will review all available data to formulate specific research objectives that would further address the CNMI's proximate coral reef fisheries management needs, while providing for long-term fisheries sustainability. Such assessments typically occur every 10 years or as needed, and the timing of this review and the formation of a Fisheries Assessment Committee has been considered in-part following the recent implementation of federal Annual Catch Limits as mandated by the Magnuson Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act.

The Fisheries Assessment Committee will be comprised of the DFW director and scientific staff, and the DLNR secretary, with the review process being open to the public and all stakeholders, including fishers, other agencies, and recreational businesses.

DFW has been specifically monitoring fish populations within marine protected areas and the lagoon over the last 10 years. Additionally DFW has an active life history program, investigating the sex and age-related structure of commonly fished species. Fisheries-dependent data is collected through an inshore and boat-based creel survey and a commercial market receipt book system. These data streams however do not address the need for vital commercial reef and bottomfish data as DFW fisheries grant restrictions have, to a certain degree, inhibited the monitoring and collection of commercial fisheries-dependent data.

As the CNMI must now comply with federally mandated annual catch limits, it has become timely that DFW establishes a comprehensive monitoring and research of our local fisheries resources. These data will be used by DFW to ensure that any catch limits imposed on CNMI fishers will be scientifically based and would promote sustainable fish harvests. Recent progress has been made in addressing these shortfalls.

DLNR assures the public that science will be the basis for the upcoming fisheries assessment review and in order to address the concerns from affected communities, comments from CNMI residents will be preferentially weighted. An introductory meeting will be announced by June to establish research targets and objectives, as well as obtain comments from other agencies, stakeholders and the community.

For more information, please contact DLNR Secretary Arnold Palacios at 670-322.9830 or DFW Fisheries Supervisor Dr. Todd Miller at tmiller.dfw@gmail.com or 670-664-6041. ***(PR)***

Coast guard recognizes Sexual Assault Awareness month

APRA HARBOR, Guam— The month of April is Sexual Assault Awareness Month. To acknowledge this important month and send a strong message against sexual assault and harassment, members of Coast Guard Sector Guam participated in Service Dress Blue day.

Service Dress Blues or SBDs are not often worn in tropical climate areas and are typically reserved for wear during formal events and ceremonies. Despite the warm weather, many members of the Sector came together to stand against sexual assault and to send a message to their fellow shipmates that sexual assault will not be tolerated in the Coast Guard.

"Sexual assault is a crime and stands in direct contrast to our core mission as life savers," stated Master Chief Michael Ellis, command master chief for Sector Guam. "Across the service, Coast Guard members are wearing one of our most formal uniforms, the Service Dress Blue, to start a dialogue and signify their commitment to eliminate this behavior across the entire fleet."

For more information about the Coast Guard's Sexual Assault Prevention and Response program, please visit www.uscg.mil/sapr. ***(USCG)***

USCG

Officers and enlisted personnel from U.S. Coast Guard Sector Guam stand together in their Service Dress Blue uniform to recognize April as Sexual Assault Awareness Month.

Business

US service firms grow more slowly, hiring weakens

WASHINGTON (AP)—Two reports Wednesday showed that U.S. service companies grew more slowly in March and private employers pulled back on hiring. The declines suggest businesses may have grown more cautious last month after federal spending cuts took effect.

The Institute for Supply Management said that its index of non-manufacturing activity fell to 54.4 last month. That's down from 56 in February and the lowest in seven months. Any reading above 50 signals expansion.

Slower hiring and a steep drop in new orders drove the index down. A gauge of hiring fell 3.9 points to 53.3, the lowest since November. That means companies kept hiring, just at a slower pace.

The ISM report covers companies that employ roughly 90 percent of the work force.

A separate report from payroll processor ADP also pointed to slightly weaker hiring in March. ADP said private employers added 158,000 jobs in March, down from 237,000 the previous month. Construction firms didn't add any jobs after three months of solid gains.

AP
In this Friday, March 1, 2013, photo, Chan Lai Ly, left, speaks with Cecilia Trinh, right, a medical assistant, during a regular check-up related to his diabetes at International Community Health Services in Seattle.

Economists were not overly concerned with the weaker reports. Several noted that ADP's figures are less reliable than the government's more comprehensive jobs report, which comes out on Friday.

Still, most say the pace of hiring has almost certainly dropped off from the previous four months, when employers added an average of 200,000 net jobs a month. And a few reduced their forecasts for March job growth after seeing the two reports.

Jim O'Sullivan, chief U.S. economist at High Frequency Economics, now expects just 160,000 net jobs, instead of 215,000. Jennifer Lee, an economist at BMO Capital Markets, said her group has lowered its forecast to 155,000, down from 220,000.

Lee said businesses may have temporarily suspended hiring because they want to see the impact of $85 billion in government spending cuts, which began on March. 1.

"It appears that businesses aren't seeing the impact (of the spending cuts) just yet but are obviously concerned about the economy going forward... and are thus holding back on orders or hiring," Lee said in a note to clients.

Still, most economists say any slowdown is likely temporary. Most say growth accelerated in the January-March quarter to a 3 percent at an annual rate, buoyed by a resilient consumer and a steady rebound in housing.

Boeing 787 testing more than half done

By JOSHUA FREED
AP BUSINESS WRITER

Boeing said it has finished more than half of the testing on its proposed battery fix for the 787, with the rest of the ground and flight tests coming in the next several days.

The test results so far have been in line with the testing Boeing did when it was developing the fix, spokesman Marc Birtel said on Wednesday.

Smoldering batteries—including one fire on the ground—prompted air safety authorities to ground the world's 787s in mid-January. Boeing has developed what it believes is a permanent fix, including more heat insulation and a system for venting battery gases outside of the plane.

The tests under way now are aimed at demonstrating that the fix worked. Ultimately, the Federal Aviation Administration will have to certify the changes before the planes fly again.

Ground testing is continuing at Boeing labs in Seattle. Boeing is giving results to the FAA as they are finished.

The testing has been taking longer than Boeing had originally suggested when it announced the fix for the 787's smoldering batteries on March 15.

"We are all working toward returning the 787 fleet to service in the most expeditious manner possible, but we are being thorough and won't shortcut the test and certification process," Birtel said in a written statement.

Delta reports financial and operating performance for March 2013

Delta Air Lines on Tuesday reported financial and operating performance for March 2013.

Unit revenues for the month of March increased 2 percent year over year, led by gains in the trans-Atlantic and Latin entities, which were partially offset in the Pacific by the impact of a weakening yen. The reduction from previous guidance is due to lower close-in bookings driven by the sequester, lower than expected demand as a result of our attempt to drive higher yields, and temporary inefficiencies during implementation of new revenue management technology.

Delta completed 99.3 percent of its flights in March and ran an on-time arrival rate of 84.9 percent.

Delta Air Lines serves more than 160 million customers each year. Delta was named by Fortune magazine as the most admired airline worldwide in its 2013 World's Most Admired Companies airline industry list, topping the list for the second time in three years. With an industry-leading global network, Delta and the Delta Connection carriers offer service to 313 destinations in 57 countries on six continents.

Headquartered in Atlanta, Delta employs nearly 80,000 employees worldwide and operates a mainline fleet of more than 700 aircraft. The airline is a founding member of the SkyTeam global alliance and participates in the industry's leading trans-Atlantic joint venture with Air France-KLM and Alitalia. Including its worldwide alliance partners, Delta offers customers more than 15,000 daily flights, with hubs in Amsterdam, Atlanta, Cincinnati, Detroit, Memphis, Minneapolis-St. Paul, New York-LaGuardia, New York-JFK, Paris-Charles de Gaulle, Salt Lake City and Tokyo-Narita. Delta is investing more than $3 billion in airport facilities and global products, services and technology to enhance the customer experience in the air and on the ground. Additional information is available on delta.com, Twitter @Delta, Google.com/+Delta and Facebook.com/delta. ***(PR)***

PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY
CNMI GOVERNMENT

INVITATION TO BID
ITB13-DEQ-098 (TINIAN)

SUBMISSION/OPENING DATE: APRIL 16, 2013 • TIME: 10:00 A.M.

"OFFICE SPACE LEASE FOR THE DIVISION OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY – TINIAN BRANCH"

COPIES OF THE SPECIFICATIONS MAY BE PICKED-UP AT THE OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR, DIVISION OF PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY, LOWER BASE DR., SAIPAN, DURING REGULAR WORKING HOURS.

THE LESSOR MUST COMPLY WITH CNMI PUBLIC LAW 15-23, ARCTICLE 5, SECTION 8652 (A) – (D)

THE COMMONWEALTH RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY AND ALL BIDS AND PROPOSALS; IN WHOLE OR IN PART, AND TO WAVE ANY IMPERFECTION IN A BID IN THE BEST INTEREST OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS. ALL BIDS SHALL BECOME THE PROPERTY OF THE CNMI GOVERNMENT.

/S/ FRANK M. RABAULIMAN
DIRECTOR OF DEQ

/S/ HERMAN S. SABLAN
DIRECTOR, P&S

MICHAEL A. WHITE, ESQ. F0122
THE LAW OFFICES OF
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ATTORNEYS FOR Plaintiff

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

CITY TRUST BANK, Plaintiffs, -v- **DORA C. REYES and BARBARA ANN REYES,** Defendants.	]]]]]]	**CIVIL ACTION NO. 09-0320** **FIRST AMENDED NOTICE OF SALE**

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that, pursuant to an Order issued by the Court in this matter on June 10, 2010, I will sell, at public auction, to the highest bidder, on the terms and conditions set forth hereinbelow, all the right, title, and interest of Defendants in and to the following property: Tract 21878-6-1 (part of Tract 21878-6, which was part of original Tract 21878, A.H. 575), as more particularly described on Drawing/Cadastral Plat No. 2064/83, the original of which was recorded on April 8, 1983 as Document No. 16910, at the Land Registry, Saipan.

Date, Time, and Place of Sale. The sale will be held on Friday, May 3, 2013, at the hour of 1:30 p.m., at The Law Offices of Michael A. White, LLC, Joeten Center, Susupe, Saipan, Northern Mariana Islands. The sale will be open to the general public.

Terms and Conditions of Sale. The Terms and Conditions of Sale may be obtained from the undersigned, either prior to or at the sale. These terms and conditions shall govern the conduct of the sale.

DATED, this 29th day of March, 2013:

/s/MICHAEL A. WHITE, Auctioneer

JANET HAN KING
KING LAW OFFICE
D'Torres Building, Garapan
P.O. Box 520030
Tinian MP 96952
Tel: 433-0419/235-8060
Fax: 235-8070

Loren A. Sutton
LAW OFFICES OF LOREN A. SUTTON
D'Torres Building, Garapan
P.O. Box 5593
Saipan, MP 96950
Phone (670) 989-0627
Fax (670) 235-8070

Counsels for Plaintiff

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

ZHANG, MEI JIA dba SISTER MARKET, Plaintiff, Vs. **EAP CORPORATION dba FILTRADE GENERAL CONSTRUCTION dba CARPET SUPPLY and SERVICES and EUFROCINIO PINON,** Defendants.	]]]]]]]]]	**CIVIL ACTION NO. 13-0051** **SUMMONS**

TO DEFENDANTS: EAP CORPORATION and EUFROCINIO PINON

YOU ARE HEREBY summoned and notified to file an answer, you make the Complaint, a copy of which is given to you herewith, within thirty (30) days after service of this Summons upon you, and to deliver or mail a copy of your answer to Loren A. Sutton, Plaintiff's attorney, whose address is Loren A. Sutton, P.O. Box 5593, Saipan, MP 96950, as soon as practicable after filing your answer or sending it to this Court for filing.

Your answer should be in writing and filed with the Clerk of this Court at Guma Hustisia Aweewe, House of Justice, P.O. Box 500307, Saipan MP 96950. It may be prepared and signed by you or for you, by your counsel, and sent to the Clerk of Court by messenger or mail. It is not necessary for you to appear personally until further notice.

If you fail to answer in accordance with this Summons, judgment by default will be taken against you for the relief demanded in the Complaint.

By order of the above Court:

DATED, this 28th day of February, 2013:

/s/ Clerk of Court

BRUCE L. MAILMAN
CNMI BAR ASS'N F0153
MAILMAN & KARA, LLC
PMB 238 PPP, Box 10,000
Saipan, MP 96950-8900
Telephone: 233-0081
Facsimile: 233-0090

Attorneys for Petitioner
KEYU BIE AKA ANTHONY
BIE BORJA

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

In the Matter of the Petition of KEYU BIE AKA ANTHONY BIE BORJA For Change of Name.	]]]]	**CIVIL ACTION NO. 13-0147 FCD**

NOTICE OF HEARING ON PETITION FOR CHANGE OF NAME

Hearing Date: April 25, 2013
Time: 10:30 a.m.
Judge: Govendo

PLEASE TAKE NOTICE that KEYU BIE AKA ANTHONY BIE BORJA has filed a petition to change his name to ANTHONY BIE BORJA, and that his petition will be heard at the Guma Hustisia, Susupe, Saipan on April 25, 2013, at 10:30 a.m. Any persons objecting to the petition shall file objections with the Court prior to the date and time fixed for hearing, and shall serve copies of such objections, prior to the hearing, on petitioner's attorneys, MAILMAN & KARA, LLC, ATTN: BRUCE L. MAILMAN, PMB 238 PPP, Box 10,000, Saipan MP 96950.

DATED, this 26th day of March, 2013.

/s/ CLERK OF COURTS

PUBLIC NOTICE

In accordance with the "Open Government Act", the Public School System State Board of Education, through their Interagency Coordinating council (ICC), is hereby serving notice to the general public that it will hold its 1st Quarter Meeting on Tuesday, April 09, 2013, 8 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. at the Saipan World Resort, Susupe Saipan. This meeting is open to the public, interested individuals are welcome.

AGENDA

I. Preliminary Matters
- **Roll Call**
- **Presence of a Quorum**
- **Adoption of Agenda**
- **Adoption of Meeting Minutes**
  - **December 19, 2012**

II. FFY 2012 Annual Performance Report

III. ICC By-Laws

IV. Next Steps

V. Adjournment

In compliance with the American Disabilities Act (ADA), individuals who wish to attend this meeting, but require accessibility such as large print or sign language interpreters must call 664-4841. Several days notice is necessary to allow organizers ample time to make necessary arrangements.

/s/Margarita Aldan
Chairperson

/s/Robin L. Palacios
Interim Coordinator,
Early Intervention Program

Paid for by IDEA, part CFunds

Nation

Study: Dementia tops cancer, heart disease in cost

By MARILYNN MARCHIONE
AP CHIEF MEDICAL WRITER

Cancer and heart disease are bigger killers, but Alzheimer's is the most expensive malady in the U.S., costing families and society $157 billion to $215 billion a year, according to a new study that looked at this in unprecedented detail.

The biggest cost of Alzheimer's and other types of dementia isn't drugs or other medical treatments, but the care that's needed just to get mentally impaired people through daily life, the nonprofit RAND Corp.'s study found.

It also gives what experts say is the most reliable estimate for how many Americans have dementia - around 4.1 million. That's less than the widely cited 5.2 million estimate from the Alzheimer's Association, which comes from a study that included people with less severe impairment.

"The bottom line here is the same: Dementia is among the most costly diseases to society, and we need to address this if we're going to come to terms with the cost to the Medicare and Medicaid system," said Matthew Baumgart, senior director of public policy at the Alzheimer's Association.

Dementia's direct costs, from medicines to nursing homes, are $109 billion a year in 2010 dollars, the new RAND report found. That compares to $102 billion for heart disease and $77 billion for cancer. Informal care by family members and others pushes dementia's total even higher, depending on how that care and lost wages are valued.

"The informal care costs are substantially higher for dementia than for cancer or heart conditions," said Michael Hurd, a RAND economist who led the study. It was sponsored by the government's National Institute on Aging and will be published in Thursday's New England Journal of Medicine.

Alzheimer's is the most common form of dementia and the sixth leading cause of death in the United States. Dementia also can result from a stroke or other diseases. It is rapidly growing in prevalence as the population ages. Current treatments only temporarily ease symptoms and don't slow the disease. Patients live four to eight years on average after an Alzheimer's diagnosis, but some live 20 years. By age 80, about 75 percent of people with Alzheimer's will be in a nursing home compared with only 4 percent of the general population, the Alzheimer's group says.

"Most people have understood the enormous toll in terms of human suffering and cost," but the new comparisons to heart disease and cancer may surprise some, said Dr. Richard Hodes, director of the Institute on Aging.

Obama to return 5 percent of salary to Treasury

WASHINGTON (AP)—Sharing a bit of budget pain, President Barack Obama will return 5 percent of his salary to the Treasury in a show of solidarity with federal workers smarting from government-wide spending cuts.

Obama's decision grew out of a desire to share in the sacrifice that government employees are making, a White House official said Wednesday. Hundreds of thousands of workers could be forced to take unpaid leave—known as furloughs—if Congress does not reach an agreement soon to undo the cuts.

The president is demonstrating that he will be paying a price, too, as the White House warns of dire economic consequences from the $85 billion in cuts—called a sequester—that started to hit federal programs last month after Congress failed to stop them. In the weeks since, the administration has faced repeated questions about how the White House itself will be affected. The cancellation of White House tours in particular has drawn mixed reactions.

A 5 percent cut from the president's salary of $400,000 per year amounts to $20,000.

Obama will return a full $20,000 to the Treasury even though only a few months remain in the fiscal year, which ends in September. He will cut his first check this month, said the White House official, who was not authorized to discuss the decision publicly and spoke on condition of anonymity.

The president and first lady Michelle Obama reported almost $790,000 in adjusted gross income in 2011, the most recent year for which their tax returns have been made public. That figure was down from the $1.7 million they brought in the year before and the $5.5 million they reported in 2009. About half of the family's income in 2011 came from Obama's salary, with the rest coming from book sales. The Obamas reported more than $172,000 in charitable donations.

"The salary for the president, as with members of Congress, is set by law and cannot be changed," Obama spokesman Jay Carney said late Wednesday. "However, the president has decided that to share in the sacrifice being made by public servants across the federal government that are affected by the sequester, he will contribute a portion of his salary back to the Treasury."

Wednesday's notice followed a similar move a day earlier by Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel, who committed to taking a salary cut equal to 14 days' pay—the same level of cut that other Defense Department civilians are being forced to take. As many as 700,000 civilians will have to take one unpaid day off each week for up to 14 weeks in the coming months.

Conn. Senate approves sweeping gun control bill

HARTFORD, Conn. (AP)—Connecticut's Senate on Wednesday approved sweeping new restrictions on weapons and large-capacity magazines, a response to last year's deadly Newtown elementary school shooting that would give the state some of the country's tightest gun control laws.

The December massacre of 26 people inside Sandy Hook Elementary School, which reignited a national debate on gun control, set the stage for changes in the state that may have been impossible elsewhere: The governor, who personally informed parents that their children had been killed that day, championed the cause, and legislative leaders, keenly aware of the attention on the state, struck a bipartisan agreement they want to serve as a national model.

"The tragedy in Newtown demands a powerful response, demands a response that transcends politics," said Senate President Donald E. Williams Jr., a Democrat. "It is the strongest and most comprehensive bill in the country."

The bill passed the Senate in a bipartisan 26-10 vote following a respectful and at times somber six-hour debate Wednesday evening. The House of Representatives then debated the bill and was expected to vote later in the night. Democratic Gov. Dannel P. Malloy has said he would sign it into law.

The legislation adds more than 100 firearms to the state's assault weapons ban and creates what officials have called the nation's first dangerous weapon offender registry as well as eligibility rules for buying ammunition. Some parts of the bill would take effect immediately after Malloy's signature, including background checks for all firearms sales.

Connecticut will join states including California, New York, New Jersey and Massachusetts in having the country's strongest gun control laws, said Brian Malte, director of mobilization for the Brady Campaign to Prevent Gun Violence in Washington.

"This would put Connecticut right at the top or near the top of the states with the strongest gun laws," Malte said.

Colorado and New York also passed new gun control requirements in the wake of the Newtown shooting, in which a 20-year-old gunman used a military-style semi-automatic rifle to kill 20 first-graders and six educators.

Asia

NKorea warns military cleared to wage nuke attack

AP

South Korean Marine K-55 self-propelled howitzers are on positions during an exercise against possible attacks by North Korea near the border village of Panmunjom in Paju, South Korea, Wednesday, April 3, 2013.

SEOUL, South Korea (AP)—Ratcheting up the rhetoric, North Korea warned early Thursday that its military has been cleared to wage an attack on the U.S. using "smaller, lighter and diversified nuclear" weapons.

The Pentagon, meanwhile, said in Washington that it will deploy a missile defense system to the U.S. Pacific territory of Guam to strengthen regional protection against a possible attack from North Korea. The defense secretary said the U.S. was seeking to defuse the situation.

■ ■ ■

SEOUL, South Korea (AP)—South Korea's defense minister says North Korea has moved a missile with "considerable range" to its east coast, but says it is not capable of hitting the United States.

Defense Minister Kim Kwan-jin on Thursday dismissed reports in Japanese and South Korean media that the missile could be a KN-08, which is believed to be a long-range missile that if operable could hit the United States.

Kim told lawmakers at a hearing that the missile's range is considerable but not far enough to hit the U.S. mainland. He said he did not know the reasons behind the missile movement, saying it "could be for testing or drills."

Experts say North Korea has not demonstrated that it has missiles capable of long range or accuracy. Some suspect that long-range missiles unveiled by Pyongyang at a parade last year were actually mockups.

■ ■ ■

Despite the rhetoric, analysts say they do not expect a nuclear attack by North Korea, which knows the move could trigger a destructive, suicidal war that no one in the region wants.

The strident warning from Pyongyang is latest in a series of escalating threats from North Korea, which has railed for weeks against joint U.S. and South Korean military exercises taking place in South Korea and has expressed anger over tightened sanctions for a February nuclear test.

Following through on one threat Wednesday, North Korean border authorities refused to allow entry to South Koreans who manage jointly run factories in the North Korean city of Kaesong.

Washington calls the military drills, which this time have incorporated fighter jets and nuclear-capable stealth bombers, routine annual exercises between the allies. Pyongyang calls them rehearsals for a northward invasion.

The foes fought on opposite sides of the three-year Korean War, which ended in a truce in 1953. The divided Korean Peninsula remains in a technical state of war six decades later, and Washington keeps 28,500 troops in South Korea to protect its ally.

U.S. Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel said Washington was doing all it can to defuse the situation, echoing comments a day earlier by Secretary of State John Kerry.

"Some of the actions they've taken over the last few weeks present a real and clear danger and threat to the interests, certainly of our allies, starting with South Korea and Japan and also the threats that the North Koreans have leveled directly at the United States regarding our base in Guam, threatened Hawaii, threatened the West Coast of the United States," Hagel said Wednesday.

In Pyongyang, the military statement said North Korean troops had been authorized to counter U.S. "aggression" with "powerful practical military counteractions," including nuclear weapons.

"We formally inform the White House and Pentagon that the ever-escalating U.S. hostile policy toward the DPRK and its reckless nuclear threat will be smashed by the strong will of all the united service personnel and people and cutting-edge smaller, lighter and diversified nuclear strike means," an unnamed spokesman from the General Bureau of the Korean People's Army said in a statement carried by state media, referring to North Korea by its formal name, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. "The U.S. had better ponder over the prevailing grave situation."

However, North Korea's nuclear strike capabilities remain unclear.

Pyongyang is believed to be working toward building an atomic bomb small enough to mount on a long-range missile. Long-range rocket launches designed to send satellites into space in 2009 and 2012 were widely considered covert tests of missile technology, and North Korea has conducted three underground nuclear tests, most recently in February.

"I don't believe North Korea has to capacity to attack the United States with nuclear weapons mounted on missiles, and won't for many years. Its ability to target and strike South Korea is also very limited," nuclear scientist Siegfried Hecker, a senior fellow at the Center for International Security and Cooperation at Stanford University, said this week.

"And even if Pyongyang had the technical means, why would the regime want to launch a nuclear attack when it fully knows that any use of nuclear weapons would result in a devastating military response and would spell the end of the regime? " he said in answers posted to CISAC's website.

In Seoul, a senior government official said Tuesday that it wasn't clear how advanced North Korea's nuclear weapons capabilities are. But he also noted fallout from any nuclear strike on Seoul or beyond would threaten Pyongyang as well, making a strike unlikely. He spoke on condition of anonymity because he wasn't authorized to speak publicly to the media.

World

Syrian rebels set their sights on strategic south

BEIRUT (AP)—Syrian rebels captured a military base in the south on Wednesday and set their sights on seizing control of a strategically important region along the border with Jordan that would give them a critical gateway to attempt an attack on the capital, Damascus.

With foreign aid and training of rebels in Jordan ramping up, the opposition fighters have regained momentum in their fight to topple President Bashar Assad.

But while the fall of southern Syria would facilitate the rebel push for Damascus, it might also create dangerous complications, potentially drawing Syria's neighbors into the 2-year-old civil war. Besides abutting Jordan, the region includes territory that borders Syria's side of the Golan Heights, along a sensitive frontier with Israel.

"This is a very sensitive triangle we are talking about," said Hisham Jaber, a retired Lebanese army general who heads the Middle East Center for Studies and Political Research in Beirut. "The fall of Daraa, if it happens, may usher in strategic changes in the area."

For the rebels, control of the south is key to their advance toward Damascus. Dozens of fighting brigades have carved up footholds in areas to the east and south of the capital, where they fire off mortar shells on the heavily guarded city.

The significance of their gains in the south was on display Wednesday when the rebels stormed a military base after a five-day siege.

"Damascus will be liberated from here, from Daraa, from the south," declared an armed fighter, a rifle slung over his shoulder and a kaffiyeh tied around his face. Videos posted online by activists showed him and other unidentified rebels celebrating inside the Syrian army's 49th battalion in the village of Alma, on the outskirts of Daraa.

"We will march to the presidential palace from here," said another fighter, amid bursts of Allahu Akbar, or God is great. The videos showed rebels from the Suqour Houran, or Eagles of Houran brigade, driving a Russian-made armored personnel carrier inside the base. "These missiles are now under our control," said a fighter, standing before a missile loaded on a truck.

Another video, posted by the Fajr al-Islam brigade, showed the rebels walking around the base as the heavy thud of incoming artillery rounds fired by nearby regime forces was heard in the background. A destroyed rocket, army trucks and radars were seen on the ground.

The videos appeared consistent with Associated Press reporting from the area.

The capture of the base is the latest advance by opposition fighters near the strategic border with Jordan. Last month, opposition fighters seized Dael, one of the province's bigger towns, and overran another air defense base in the region.

Opposition fighters battling Assad's troops have been chipping away at the regime's hold on the southern part of the country in recent weeks with the help of an influx of foreign-funded weapons.

Their aim is to secure a corridor from the Jordanian border to Damascus in preparation for an eventual assault on the capital. And they have made major progress along the way. Activists say several towns and villages along the Daraa-Damascus route are now in rebel hands.

A Western diplomat who monitors Syria from his base in Jordan said the fall of Daraa appeared imminent, possibly in the next few days or weeks. His assessment was based on classified intelligence information, he said, speaking on condition of anonymity in order not to hamper his intelligence-gathering efforts.

Daraa's fall could unleash lawlessness on Jordan's northern border and send jitters across the kingdom, a key U.S. ally which fears Islamic extremist groups on its doorstep.

Also of grave concern are rebel advances in areas near the Israeli-occupied Golan Heights.

"If Daraa falls, the rebels will come face-to-face with the Israeli army in the Golan," said Hilal Khashan, a political science professor at the American University of Beirut.

Daraa province separates Damascus from the Golan Heights, which Israel captured in 1967 and annexed in 1981. In recent weeks, Israel has seen Syrian mortar rounds and bullets land in Israeli territory and tanks enter a demilitarized zone in the Golan Heights. Israeli security officials believe the incidents have been inadvertent but have threatened to retaliate.

AP

This image taken from video obtained from Ugarit News, which has been authenticated based on its contents and other AP reporting, shows a man holding a scarf in the colors of the Syrian revolutionary flag after rebels seized a military base in Daraa, Syria, on Wednesday, April 3, 2013.

WORLD BRIEFS

Argentina: flooding from torrential rains kill 52

LA PLATA, Argentina (AP)—At least 52 people drowned in their homes and cars, were electrocuted or died in other accidents as flooding from days of torrential rains swamped Argentina's low-lying capital and province of Buenos Aires. At least 46 died Wednesday in and around the city of La Plata, Gov. Daniel Scioli said. Six deaths were reported a day earlier in the nation's capital. Many people climbed onto their roofs in the pouring rain after storm sewers backed up. Water surged up through drains in their kitchen and bathroom floors, and then poured in over their windowsills.

Venezuela opposition: Military can't take sides

CARACAS, Venezuela (AP)—Venezuela's presidential campaign on Wednesday veered between warnings of military meddling in the April 14 vote and opposition mirth at the acting president's suggestion that the spirit of Hugo Chavez visited him as "a little bird" while he prayed. Opposition lawmaker Alfonso Marquina presented a complaint to Venezuela's elections council, demanding it sanction officers who have publicly backed Nicolas Maduro, who has been acting president since President Hugo Chavez's death on March 5. Marquina has alleged that Defense Minister Diego Molero and National Guard Gen. Antonio Benavides plan to use military resources to intimidate voters, especially those dependent on government services, to cast ballots for Maduro.

Military: Gaza militants fire rockets at Israel

JERUSALEM (AP)—The Israeli military says Gaza militants have fired rockets at the south of the country a day after Israel warned of an escalation. A military spokesman says several rockets were fired early Thursday. One exploded in Israel causing no injuries while the others exploded prematurely inside Gaza. The spokesman spoke on condition of anonymity in line with military regulations. Gaza militants have fired several rockets at Israel since November, when an informal truce took hold after eight days of fighting triggered by almost daily Palestinian rocket attacks.

Since fierce clash, Egypt's crisis takes new turn

CAIRO (AP)—It has come to be known as the "Battle of the Mountain": a ferocious fight between members of Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood and their opponents near the group's Cairo headquarters. In a country that has already seen crisis after crisis, it could mark a dangerous turning point in the political turmoil.

The aftermath of the fighting is raising worries that the confrontation between Islamists,, who dominate power in the country, and their opponents is moving out of anyone's control.

The riot on March 22 revealed a new readiness of some in the anti-Brotherhood opposition to turn to violence, insisting they have no choice but to fight back against a group they accuse of using violence against them for months. The fight featured an unusual vengefulness. Young protesters were seen at one point pelting a Brotherhood member with firebombs and setting him aflame. Others chased anyone with a conservative Muslim beard, while Islamists set up checkpoints searching for protesters. Each side dragged opponents into mosques and beat them.

Since the fight, Islamists enraged by what they saw as aggression against their headquarters have for the past week hiked up calls for wider action against opponents—and the media in particular—accusing them of trying to overthrow Islamist President Mohammed Morsi.

Those calls may explain moves by the country's top prosecutor the past week: the questioning of a popular television comedian, Bassem Youssef, whose Jon Stewart-style satires of Morsi drive Islamists into knots of anger, the summoning of several other media personalities and the issuing of arrest warrants against five opposition activists on accusations of fomenting violence.

Opposition activists warn the moves are the opening of a campaign of intimidation to silence Morsi's critics. The presidency says the prosecutor is just enforcing the law and that Morsi's office has nothing to do with the moves. Morsi's supporters say they are showing restraint against extreme provocation. But rhetoric within the Brotherhood has increased in fervor. This week, Brotherhood head Mohammed Badie accused "some politicians" of "trying to generate something like a civil war in the community," in an apparent reference to opposition leaders.

"After all that blood and all the criminality in the street, there must be decisiveness," Gamal Heshmat, a lawmaker with the Brotherhood's political party, said of the recent arrest warrants. "This is a public demand. Now people must prove their innocence."

For opponents of Morsi, the battle was a sign that anger at the Brotherhood is spreading beyond its circles to the broader public, nine months into the administration of Brotherhood veteran Morsi.

Ziad el-Oleimi, a former lawmaker and revolutionary activist who lives in the neighborhood where the clashes took place, said local residents were behind the worst beatings of Brotherhood members, rather than the protesters who led the day's march on the group's headquarters.

Previous Brotherhood aggression "is starting to provoke people," said el-Oleimi, who was a leading figure in the 2011 protests that toppled Morsi's predecessor, Hosni Mubarak. "This time was a game changer. They had anticipated they would beat up the protesters, the opposition, and teach them a lesson. This is not what happened." Locals had already filed appeals to local authorities demanding that the Brotherhood office be removed from their neighborhood.

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Off the Wall

Freezing weather wipes out German flea circus

BERLIN (AP)—An entire troupe of performing fleas has fallen victim to the freezing temperatures currently gripping Germany.

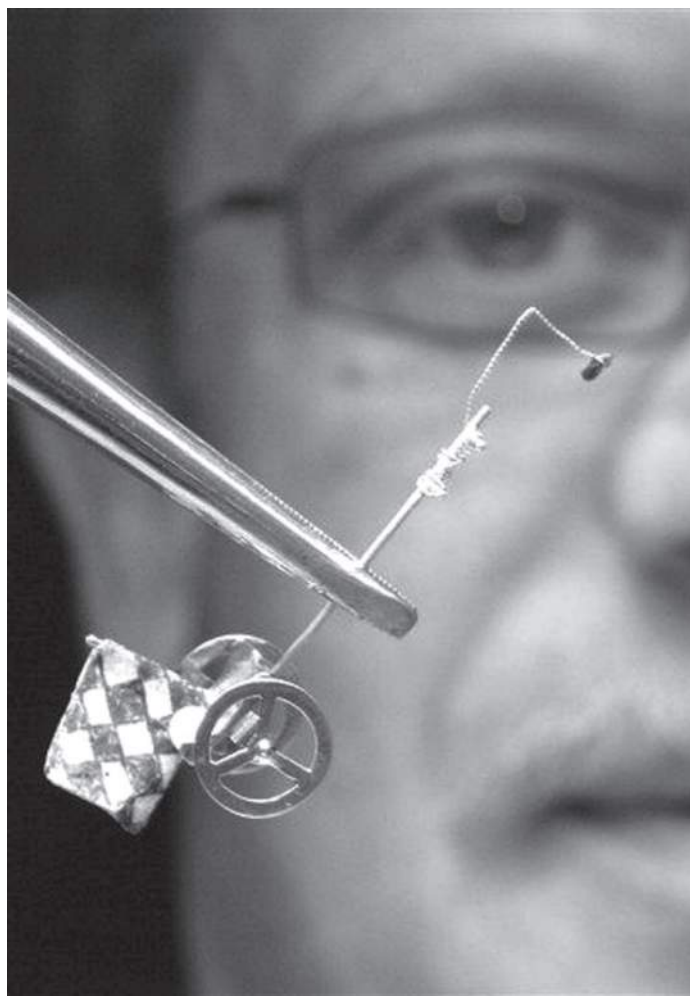
Flea circus director Robert Birk says he was shocked to find all of his 300 fleas dead inside their transport box Wednesday morning.

The circus immediately scrambled to find and train a new batch so it could fulfill its engagements at an open-air fair in the western town of Mechernich-Kommern.

Michael Faber, who organizes the fair, told The Associated Press that an insect expert at a nearby university was able to provide 50 fleas in time for the first show Sunday.

Faber says he hopes they'll "get through this without any more fatalities."

Birk said it was the first time his circus had lost all of its fleas to the cold in one go.



In this Sept. 14, 2005 file picture Robert Birk director of a German flea circus poses with a special cart with Bavarian flag and one of his fleas at the Octoberfest beer festival in Munich. AP

FBI 'flying saucers' NM memo bureau's most viewed

ALBUQUERQUE, N.M. (AP)—A single-page FBI memo relaying a vague and unconfirmed report of flying saucers found in New Mexico in 1950 has become the most popular file in the bureau's electronic reading room.

The memo, dated March 22, 1950, was sent by FBI Washington, D.C., field office chief Guy Hottel to then-Director J. Edgar Hoover.

According to the FBI, the document was first made public in the late 1970s and more recently has been available in the "Vault," an electronic reading room launched by the agency in 2011, where it has become the most popular item, viewed nearly 1 million times. The Vault contains around 6,700 public documents.

Vaguely written, the memo describes a story told by an unnamed third party who claims an Air Force investigator reported that three flying saucers were recovered in New Mexico, though the memo doesn't say exactly where in the state. The FBI indexed the report for its files but did not investigate further; the name of an "informant" reporting some of the information is blacked out in the memo.

The memo offers several bizarre details.

Inside each saucer, "each one was occupied by three bodies of human shape but only 3 feet tall, dressed in metallic cloth of a very fine texture," according to the report. "Each body was bandaged in a manner similar to the blackout suits used by speed fliers and test pilots."

The saucers were found in New Mexico because the government had a high-powered radar set up in the area and it is believed the radar interfered with the controlling mechanism of the UFOs, according to the informant.

The FBI filed the typed page neatly away 63 years ago at its headquarters and "no further evaluation was attempted."

The memo does not appear to be related to the 1947 case in Roswell, N.M., when Air Force officials said they recovered a UFO, only later to recant and say it was a research balloon.

OFFBEAT BRIEFS

Video shows Calif. man's clumsy burglary attempt

REDDING, Calif. (AP)—Police in a far Northern California city are asking for the public's help in identifying the suspect in a botched burglary. But if the man is wearing the same bright pants and jacket seen in surveillance footage, they may not need it. The video released Wednesday by Redding police shows the man walking up to a closed grocery store in the middle of the night and looking inside through its front window. He walks away but quickly returns, his face covered with what appears to be a black stocking. He throws something at the window, cracking it. The man then flees, tripping twice, once on a parking curb. He is wearing a brightly patterned jacket and pants. Police say they responded to a burglary alarm at the grocery store a

Pa. man accused of stealing Cake Boss' freebies

PITTSBURGH (AP)—A Pittsburgh man has been accused of cutting a line waiting to get free cakes from the Cake Boss and stealing four of them. Hundreds of people were waiting Tuesday morning in downtown Pittsburgh to get the free cakes from the star of the Hoboken, N.J.-based TV show "Cake Boss," Buddy Valastro. Police spokeswoman Diane Richard says William Davenport took four cakes worth about $27 each from a storage area. Police say when they stopped Williams he apologized for stealing the cakes and admitted he was intoxicated. Police say the cake theft caused a great commotion among people who had been waiting in line for hours. Officers had to break up fights caused by other people who tried to jump the line. No attorney for Williams is listed in court papers.

Austrian police chase herd of cattle through town

VIENNA (AP)—Austrian police and firefighters have taken on the role of urban cowboys in a two-day round-up of a herd of cattle that broke out of a fenced-off pasture and decided to go into town. A police statement says the 43 steers defied attempts by police and volunteer firefighters to recapture them after wandering off Thursday and heading toward the Upper Austrian town of Freistadt. After being chased away from the railway station, they endangered motorists by stampeding onto a two-lane highway before running into a town suburb. Two firefighters who tried to stop them were injured and needed hospital treatment. The statement says 18 of the animals remain on the loose Friday. The rest have been corralled or tranquilized.

Science & Technology

REVIEW

Google laptop impressive, but not for all

SIEM REAP, Cambodia (AP)—Google's first high-end laptop, the Chromebook Pixel, is an impressive machine. It feels light and comfortable in my hands and on my lap. Its high-resolution display makes photos look sharp and video come to life. From a hardware standpoint, it's everything I'd want a laptop to be. But the Pixel isn't very practical—at least not yet—for most people. It works well when you have a steady Internet connection, but can't do much once you lose that connection. And because it uses Google's own operating system, it doesn't run enough software yet to replace your other machines.

I brought the Pixel along for a nearly three-week trip to Thailand and Cambodia, where I knew I wouldn't have the type of round-the-clock access I'm used to in the U.S. I was surprised by how much I could do, but quickly got frustrated when I couldn't do more.

Such frustration doesn't come cheap. Prices for the Pixel start at $1,299, just $200 less than a MacBook with a comparable screen and the ability to do much more offline. A higher-end Pixel with cellular access costs $150 more than the basic model and is scheduled to start shipping Monday.

This image provided by Google shows the company's first high-end chromebook Pixel. AP

For those unfamiliar with Google's entry into the laptop market—I guess that's many of you—the Pixel and other Chromebooks run a Google operating system called Chrome OS. Based on the Chrome Web browser available for Windows and Mac computers, Chrome OS underscores Google's vision of letting the Internet do all the heavy lifting instead of your computer.

As a result, you can power up and start working on the Chromebook right away. Boot time is minimal because there's not a lot of software to load. Those functions are pulled from the Internet as needed. That also means updates come regularly and don't need any installation on your part.

There's not a lot of storage on the machine either. The idea is to keep as much as you can online, through a storage service such as Google Drive or Dropbox.

Think of the Chromebook as a gateway to the Internet. You can download apps from Google and others to run on the Chromebook, but many of those apps do little more than access a website on your Chrome browser when you're online.

Previous Chromebooks haven't been too powerful. They have tended to be low-cost machines ideal for casual users who mostly need computers for Internet tasks such as email and Facebook.

Google is changing the dynamics with the Pixel. It's targeting power users who are willing to pay more money for the best features.

For $1,299, you get a well-built machine sporting a touch-sensitive display that measures nearly 13 inches diagonally. The screen's resolution is among the best out there. At 239 pixels per inch, it tops the 227 pixels per inch on the 13-inch MacBook Pro, though your eyes might not be able to discern that small difference.

The basic Pixel model comes with 32 gigabytes of storage and has a slot for external storage, such as a camera's SD card. Each machine also comes with a three-year subscription for 1 terabyte of online storage through Google Drive. It's normally $50 a month.

Google also offers a $1,449 model that has double the internal storage, at 64 GB, and 100 megabytes a month of LTE cellular data access through Verizon Wireless for two years. That's suitable for occasional use, but if you'll be away from Wi-Fi a lot, you'll need a data plan. Prices start at $10 a day.

The LTE model isn't set to ship until Monday, but Google lent me one to try out. I was impressed with the LTE offering, as the cellular access would help cover some of the gaps I'd have outside my home and office. But it's of no use abroad. Nor is LTE of use on airplanes. Both models offer 12 free sessions with Gogo's Wi-Fi service on airplanes, but those are good only for flights that offer that capability. Those tend to be domestic flights in the U.S.

So I found myself trying to use Chromebook without a steady Internet connection.

Before I left, I configured the Chromebook browser to enable offline access to Google Docs, the company's set of online tools such as word processing and spreadsheets. With offline access, you're able to access and edit documents. Changes get synced with the online versions the next time you connect to the Internet.

I was able to do a fair amount of writing offline, but every now and then, my document would disappear, replaced by Google's "Aw, Snap" error message sporting a sad face icon. That would be cute if hours of work weren't at stake.

Although I was usually able to recover the file and never lost more than a paragraph of writing, I got nervous with every crash. Google Docs lets you save copies on your computer as text files or in Microsoft's Word format. But that function works only when you are online, even for changes you are making offline. Even without the crashes, I wasn't getting tools such as spell-checking while offline. That's not an issue when using Word or Apple's Pages on other machines.

Beyond text documents, the Chromebook is able to view photos, PDFs and other files, just like any other computer. It can also read files in Microsoft's Word and Excel formats, though you must convert them to Google Docs to make changes.

And obviously, it can browse the Web. I successfully paid credit card bills, bought magazines and watched Hulu video on the Pixel. I was able to read an e-book on Amazon's Web-based Kindle app, too.

But there are limits, particular when sites require plug-ins that aren't available for the Chromebook.

And while I was able to write this story on a Chromebook, our publishing system isn't compatible with it.

Life & Style

Leno to leave NBC's 'Tonight Show' next spring

NEW YORK (AP)—NBC on Wednesday announced its long-rumored switch in late night, replacing Jay Leno at the "Tonight" show with Jimmy Fallon and moving the iconic franchise back to New York.

Fallon will take over in about a year, the switch coinciding with NBC's Winter Olympics coverage. Veteran "Saturday Night Live" producer Lorne Michaels also will take over as executive producer of "Tonight."

NBC made no announcement on who would replace Fallon at the 12:35 a.m. "Late Night" slot, although Seth Meyers of "Saturday Night Live" is considered a strong candidate.

The change at "Tonight," the longest-running and most popular late-night talk show, had been widely reported but not confirmed by the network until Wednesday. NBC reportedly just wrapped up negotiations with Fallon on a contract extension.

Steve Burke, chief executive officer of NBC Universal, said the network is purposefully making the move when Leno is still at the top of the ratings, just as when Leno replaced Johnny Carson at "Tonight" in 1992.

"Jimmy Fallon is a unique talent and this is his time," Burke said.

Leno, in a statement, offered his congratulations to Fallon.

"I hope you're as lucky as me and hold on to the job until you're the old guy," he said. "If you need me, I'll be at the garage."

Fallon said, "I'm really excited to host a show that starts today instead of tomorrow."

Emotions were mixed among people waiting outside Leno's Burbank, Calif., studio to attend the taping of Wednesday's "Tonight" show.

"We love you, Jimmy!" said Natalie Renfro, 45, of Salt Lake City. But she gave a shout out to Leno, too: "I'll miss that big chin!"

Ryan Kelly, 39, of Los Angeles, said he's a Leno fan but added that the comedian has "had a good run. ... It's probably time for a fresh face. He's done a good job and I'm sure he'll pop up on TV somewhere else."

As for switching to Fallon, "I'll give it a shot," Kelly said.

On his "Late Show" Wednesday on CBS, David Letterman feasted on NBC's announcement.

"Jay Leno now is being replaced, and this is the second time this has happened," he said in his monologue. "I mean, it's crazy. He's being replaced by a younger late night talk show host—what could possibly go wrong? Honestly. They had pretty good luck with this in the past."

Later, Letterman offered a backhanded salute to Leno that wished him well with his stand-up appearances.

"But good luck to Jay. I know he'll be out on the road, getting it done and taking care of business. And congratulations on a nice long run there at the `Tonight Show,' if, in fact, you're not coming back," Letterman said, according to a CBS transcript.

He devoted his Top 10 list to "things we'll miss about Jay Leno," including this at No. 4: "Can't remember the name of the bit, but it's the one where Jay is walking."

NBC has been quietly building a new studio for Fallon at its Rockefeller Center headquarters. "Tonight" began in New York in the 1950s, but Carson moved it to California in 1972. Starting next year, Fallon, Letterman, Jon Stewart and Stephen Colbert will tape late-night shows in New York. ABC's Jimmy Kimmel and TBS's Conan O'Brien will be the top California-based shows.

"The `Tonight' show will bring even more jobs and economic activity to our city, and we couldn't be happier that one of New York's own is bringing the show back to where it started, and where it belongs," said New York Mayor Michael Bloomberg.

New York state recently added a tax credit in its budget that seemed designed specifically to benefit NBC's move east with "Tonight."

While a storied part of television tradition, the network late-night shows find themselves with much more competition now with cable programs like "Adult Swim," smaller talk shows hosted by Chelsea Handler and the Comedy Central duo of Stewart and Colbert, and a device—a large number of people take that time to watch programs they had taped earlier on their DVRs.

NBC is worried that Kimmel will establish himself as a go-to late night performer for a younger generation if the network doesn't move swiftly to install Fallon. ABC moved Kimmel's time slot to directly compete with Leno earlier this year.

But the move also has the potential to backfire with Leno's fans, who did not embrace O'Brien when Leno was temporarily moved to prime time a few years ago.

"The guys at NBC are not totally stupid and are not going to shoot themselves in the foot," said Gary Carr, senior vice president and executive director of national broadcast for the ad buying firm TargetCast. "I think it's a good move for them long-term. But it may have short-term ramifications."

NBC has long prided itself on smooth transitions, but that reputation took a hit with the short-lived and ill-fated move of O'Brien to "Tonight" and Leno to prime time. In morning television, the "Today" show has taken a ratings nose dive in large measure because of anger at how Ann Curry was treated when she was ousted last year as Matt Lauer's co-host.

The Leno-Fallon changeover didn't begin smoothly. Leno had been cracking jokes about NBC's prime-time futility, angering NBC entertainment chief Robert Greenblatt, who sent a note to Leno telling him to cool it. That only made Leno go after NBC management much harder.

The first public effort toward making the transition smooth came Monday night, when Leno and Fallon appeared in a comic video making fun of the late-night rumors. It aired in between each man's show.

John Dawson, general manager for five NBC affiliates that have extensive reach throughout Kansas, said it will be difficult to give up a program that wins its time period by 33 percent.

"Jay has always been a great friend to the affiliates," he said. "For that alone it will be hard to give up."

But he said he believes in Fallon and in NBC's corporate owner, Comcast Corp., the nation's largest cable company.

"Comcast certainly knows how to launch entertainment programming," Dawson said.

AP

This undated promotional image released by NBC shows Jay Leno, host of "The Tonight Show with Jay Leno," left, and Jimmy Fallon, host of "Late Night with Jimmy Fallon," in Los Angeles.

Late-night hosts revel in Leno-Fallon changeover

LOS ANGELES (AP)—The coming Jay Leno-Jimmy Fallon "Tonight" handover is the talk of the late-night TV town.

David Letterman poked fun at Leno and NBC. Leno poked fun at Letterman and NBC. Jimmy Kimmel mocked himself. Fallon played it cool. And Conan O'Brien took the high road after NBC said Wednesday that Fallon will inherit "Tonight" from Leno in 2014—as O'Brien did in 2009, before Leno took it back.

"I want to congratulate Jimmy. That is a really fun gig," O'Brien said on his TBS talk show, drawing laughs from the studio audience. "It is," he said, protesting, then added, "And Jimmy is the perfect guy to do it. Congratulations, Jimmy."

It was short and sweet. Letterman, on the other hand, made a three-course meal out of the news on CBS' "Late Show," starting with his monologue.

"NBC, God bless `em, announced the official date for Jay Leno's departure—no mention of his official date of return, however," he said. "I happen to know Jay's got another job on network that has greater viewership, higher ratings: Univision."

Then Letterman settled beber the name of the bit, but it's the one where Jay is walking."

Leno, who won the "Tonight" job over Letterman in 1992, was ready with a mono-

AP

This Jan. 13, 2013 file photo shows Jay Leno, host of "The Tonight Show with Jay Leno," left, and Jimmy Fallon, host of "Late Night with Jimmy Fallon" backstage at the 70th Annual Golden Globe Awards in Beverly Hills, Calif.

hind his desk for more.

"Good luck to Jay. I know he'll be out on the road, getting it done and taking care of business. And congratulations on a nice long run there at the `Tonight Show,' if in fact you're not coming back," he said.

And there was a "things we'll miss about Jay Leno" top 10 list, including No. 4: "Can't remem-

logue to mark the newly announced transition.

"Folks, I got to be honest with you, I had a really awkward day today. I had to call David Letterman and tell him he didn't get the `Tonight Show' again," Leno said.

Then came NBC's turn to get jabbed.

"I just have one request for Jimmy: We've all fought, kicked and scratched to get this network up to fifth place. Now we have to keep it there. Jimmy, don't let it slip into sixth!" Leno said, according to a network transcript.

Kimmel, whose move to 11:35 p.m. Eastern on ABC helped trigger the NBC switch, played it safe with a mild monologue joke about himself.

"As you probably heard ... I will take over as new host of the `Tonight Show,' he said, only to be interrupted by a producer's whispered correction. "Ummm, apparently it was a different Jimmy. ... Does anyone know what the return policy is on yachts?" Kimmel asked.

Fallon, who has about a year to ponder his future promotion, was succinct.

"Welcome! This is `Late Night with Jimmy Fallon ... for now," he said. "You guys probably heard the news: I'm going to be taking over the `Tonight Show' next February! But don't worry. Until February, our focus is right here on whatever this show is called."

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Jurassic Park 3D

Friday		7:00	10:00
Saturday	1:00	7:00	10:00
Sunday	1:00	7:00	
Monday & Thursday		7:00	

Cast: Sam Neill, Laura Dern, Jeff Goldblum
Genre: Science Fiction • Rated PG 13

Synopsis

Steven Spielberg's phenomenally successful sci-fi adventure thriller is graced by state-of-the-art special effects from the team of Stan Winston, Phil Tippett and Michael Lantieri from George Lucas's Industrial Light & Magic. The film follows two dinosaur experts – Dr. Alan Grant (Sam Neill) and Dr. Ellie Sattler Laura Dern)– as they are invited by eccentric millionaire John Hammond (Richard Attenborough) to preview his new amusement park on an island off Costa Rica.

Jurassic Park 2D

Friday		4:00	
Saturday		4:00	
Sunday		4:00	
Monday & Thursday		4:00	

Cast: Sam Neill, Laura Dern, Jeff Goldblum
Genre: Science Fiction • Rated PG 13

Evil Dead

Friday		4:20	7:20	9:50
Saturday	1:20	4:20	7:20	9:50
Sunday	1:20	4:20	7:20	
Monday & Thursday		4:20	7:20	

Cast: Lou Taylor Pucci, Jessica Lucas, Liz Blackmore
Genre: Horror • Rated R

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

The Host

Friday		4:05	7:05	9:35
Saturday	1:05	4:05	7:05	9:35
Sunday	1:05	4:05	7:05	
Monday & Thursday		4:05	7:05	

Cast: Saoirse Ronan, Max Irons, Jake Abel
Genre: Science Fiction • Rated PG 13

Tyler Perry's Temptation

Friday		4:10	7:10	9:45
Saturday	1:10	4:10	7:10	9:45
Sunday	1:10	4:10	7:10	
Monday & Thursday		4:10	7:10	

Cast: Jurnee Smollett-Bell, Vanessa Williams
Genre: Drama • Rated PG 13

G.I. Joe: Retaliation 3D

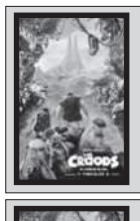
Friday		7:25	9:40
Saturday	1:25	7:25	9:40
Sunday	1:25	7:25	
Monday & Thursday		7:25	

Cast: Dwayne Johnson, Bruce Willis, Channing Tatum
Genre: Action • Rated PG 13

G.I. Joe: Retaliation 2D

Friday		4:25
Saturday		4:25
Sunday		4:25
Monday & Thursday		4:25

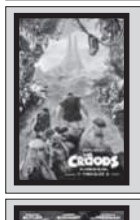
Cast: Dwayne Johnson, Bruce Willis, Channing Tatum
Genre: Action • Rated PG 13



The Croods 3D

Friday		7:15	
Saturday	1:15	7:15	
Sunday	1:15	7:15	
Monday & Thursday		7:15	

Cast: Emma Stone, Nicolas Cage, Ryan Reynolds
Genre: Children's/Family • Rated PG



The Croods 2D

Friday		4:15	9:30
Saturday		4:15	9:30
Sunday		4:15	
Monday & Tuesday		4:15	

Cast: Emma Stone, Nicolas Cage, Ryan Reynolds
Genre: Children's/Family • Rated PG

Olympus Has Fallen

Friday		4:30	7:30	9:55
Saturday	1:30	4:30	7:30	9:55
Sunday	1:30	4:30	7:30	
Monday & Thursday		4:30	7:30	

Cast: Gerard Butler, Morgan Freeman, Aaron Eckhart
Genre: Action • Rated R

● NO PASSES ■ NO PASSES OR SUPER SAVERS

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Tweet about 'Daily Show' boomerangs on US Embassy

WASHINGTON (AP)—Yikes! It seems "The Daily Show" and diplomacy don't mix.

That's the lesson the U.S. Embassy in Cairo is learning the hard way after being rebuked by both the Egyptian government and the State Department for causing an international incident. The embassy tweeted a link to a Jon Stewart monologue that mocked Egypt's president—offending the Egyptians—and then deleted its entire Twitter account before restoring it without the post in question, irritating Washington.

Egyptian President Mohammed Morsi's office called the tweet "inappropriate" and unbecoming of a diplomatic mission while the State Department said the unusual affair was the result of "glitches" in the embassy's social media policies that are now being corrected.

The imbroglio over the tweet comes at a time of rising tensions between Cairo and Washington, which has expressed deep concerns that Morsi's government is backsliding on human rights protections.

And, it underscores the pitfalls of allowing individual American embassies to control the messages they disseminate through social media.

The trouble began Tuesday when the embassy posted a link to Stewart's monologue on his Comedy Central show the night before. Stewart took savage aim at Morsi for the arrest and interrogation of Egyptian comic Bassam Youssef, who has frequently criticized the president on a popular TV program that has been likened to Stewart's own.

AP

In this Oct. 18, 2012 file photo, Jon Stewart speaks during a taping of "The Daily Show with John Stewart", in New York.

In the clip, Stewart accused Morsi of being petty, undemocratic and ignoring more pressing problems like Egypt's economic crisis and violent crime to go after satirists who are critical of his government. He pointed out that he has made a living by poking fun at political leaders and that such activity is harmless and should be protected.

Morsi's office responded to the embassy's post on its own Twitter feed, saying: "It's inappropriate for a diplomatic mission to engage in such negative political propaganda."

The embassy responded on Wednesday by deleting its entire Twitter account, drawing the wrath of State Department headquarters in Washington, which was already peeved by the initial post. The account was then restored minus the Stewart tweet.

"Embassies and consulates and their senior leadership manage the content that is on their feeds and they are expected to use good policy judgment in doing that," State Department spokeswoman Victoria Nuland said.

On Monday, Nuland had made comments similar to Stewart's, although more nuanced and couched in diplomatic terms, about Youssef's arrest.

She declined to say if the State Department agreed with the Egyptian government's criticism of the tweet. But she suggested the embassy had erred by posting a link to a video that is already widely available on the Internet.

"I can't speak to the decision to re-tweet Jon Stewart to start with," she said. "But Jon Stewart is a comedy show in the U.S., as you know. It is publicly available content."

She said the "glitches" she referred to were "the fact that they obviously put up something that they later took down, that they took down the whole site, which should not probably have been the way that went, and that in the past there have been differences between the Twitter team and senior post management."

The U.S. Embassy in Cairo last year engaged in a public spat with Morsi's Muslim Brotherhood over the breach of the embassy's walls by protesters upset over an anti-Islam film produced in the U.S. and posted on the Web.

Steve Albani, spokesman for Comedy Central, declined to comment on the flap.

Nuland stressed that the U.S. position on the arrest of Youssef, whom she described as Egypt's "Jon Stewart counterpart," remained unchanged since Monday when she referred to it as part of a ""disturbing trend" of growing restrictions on freedom of expression in Egypt.

"There does not seem to be an evenhanded application of justice here," she said, adding that the Egyptian government has been slow to investigate police brutality or attacks on anti-Morsi protesters and journalists.

On Tuesday, the Muslim Brotherhood's Freedom and Justice Party denounced Nuland's comments as "blatant interference" in Egypt's internal affairs.

Hours later, Secretary of State John Kerry jumped into the fray saying that Washington has "real concerns about the direction Egypt appears to be moving in," adding that the country is at a "tipping point."

'Duck Dynasty' stars swap jokes, greet fans

METAIRIE, La. (AP)—Phil Robertson, one of the shaggy-bearded stars of the hit reality TV series "Duck Dynasty," used to get mistaken for a homeless man. He said he was even singled out once at an airport for a security search and wands went "places my woman hasn't been in years."

These days, though, the patriarch of a family of duck hunters-turned-millionaires is more likely to get stopped by strangers who want autographs or pictures.

"When you look like this, there's no hat and glasses that can cover it up," Phil's son Willie said, drawing laughs from his family of co-stars. "I'm certainly more recognizable. I can tell you that."

Last Saturday, more than 500 fans showed up at an autograph session with the family. The Robertsons cracked jokes about their celebrity status and signed books, T-shirts, shoes and even some hunting rifles for fans in their home state of Louisiana.

The show, which airs on A&E, follows the family and its business, Duck Commander, which specializes in handmade duck calls and other bird hunting gear. But the Robertsons are easily distracted from their work and amuse the audience with their humorous adventures.

The show premiered in 2012 and is in its third season, drawing about 8 million viewers a week. The Robertsons would not talk about the status of a fourth season or reports they were holding out for more money. But if their popularity is any indication, they'll be back.

AP

This 2012 photo released by A&E shows, from left, Phil Robertson, Jase Robertson, Si Robertson and Willie Robertson from the A&E series, "Duck Dynasty," airing Wednesdays at 10 p.m. EST.

The Robertsons have fan merchandise such as bobble-head dolls, duck-themed license plates and Chia Pet planters in the shape of their faces with greenery that grows like their beards.

At the autograph session, Phil, with his sons Willie and Jase, and his brother Silas "Uncle Si" Robertson, gathered outside a sporting goods store in the New Orleans suburb of Metairie. Kids in the crowd blew into duck calls while a group of women chanted "Si, Si, Si, Si!"

"We're getting more and more used to it as we go around, seeing people crowded up and wanting a picture or an autograph, and we think it's neat," said Willie Robertson. "We were hoping the show would have that kind of impact, and it has."

Hundreds of fans arrived too late and were kept behind red velvet ropes several yards away from the stars. Some came from as far away as Cow Bay in Nova Scotia, Canada.

"Nova Scotians, they're rednecks also," said Dwayne Doucette, a Canadian who was with the group holding signs that read: "We love Duck Dynasty" and "Canada loves Duck Dynasty and Duck Commander."

Jase Robertson, whose real name is Jason, said the duck calls are still handmade, one-by-one. To meet demand, the business has gone from a dozen employees before the show aired to about 75 in the past year. They make 14,000 duck calls a week, he said. Fans buy the duck calls even though many have no intention of hunting, he said.

Casey Cambre and his 5-year-old daughter, Ava, waited more than eight hours to be the first in line to meet the family.

"I've never done anything like this, ever, not even for a concert," said Cambre. "A lot of people like the show because it's funny. I like it because it's a good, clean, wholesome family show."

Each of the show's episodes ends with the family gathered around the dinner table in prayer.

"We're trying to infuse a little good into the American culture," Phil Robertson said. "Love God, love your neighbor, hunt ducks. Raise your kids, make them behave, love them. I don't see the down side to that."

‘America’s Got Talent’ coming to NYC

NEW YORK (AP)—NBC’s “America’s Got Talent” is moving from New Jersey to New York City’s Radio City Music Hall.

New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo made the announcement Wednesday.

The eighth season of the popular talent competition will air live from the landmark theater twice a week, starting July 23.

The show is relocating from the New Jersey Performing Arts Center in Newark.

Cuomo says the move will create more than 500 jobs and generate $100 million each season. New York State recently extended its Film Production Tax Credit to attract television shows to the state.

Supermodel Heidi Klum was recently added to “America’s Got Talent” as a judge.

AP

This March 4, 2013 photo shows the judges for season eight of the talent competition series “America’s Got Talent,” from left, Howard Stern, Heidi Klum, Mel B, and Howie Mandel during auditions in New Orleans.

MTV: Crew wasn’t with ‘BUCKWILD’ star when he died

SISSONVILLE, W.Va. (AP)—Production crews were not with a young star of the reality show “BUCKWILD” when he died over Easter weekend and hadn’t filmed him since earlier in the week, MTV officials said Wednesday.

Shain Gandee, 21, was found dead Monday in his SUV near Sissonville, along with two passengers.

Autopsies determined that all three died of carbon monoxide poisoning, possibly caused by the vehicle’s tailpipe being submerged in mud. That could have allowed the invisible gas to fill the vehicle’s cabin.

MTV spokesman Jake Urbanski said it would be at least a few weeks before producers and cast members decide whether to continue shooting season two. For now, he said, everyone is focused on supporting Gandee’s friends and family.

Also killed were his 48-year-old uncle, David Gandee, and 27-year-old Donald Robert Myers.

Cunningham-Parker-Johnson Funeral Home in Charleston said services for Shain and David Gandee were scheduled for 2 p.m. Sunday at the Charleston Municipal Auditorium. A private family burial service will follow in Thaxton Cemetery.

Family members said David Gandee worked for Appalachian Tire Co., was a fan of both the Pittsburgh Steelers and the West Virginia University Mountaineers, and loved golf.

Ryan Gosling stands up for cows to milk producers

LOS ANGELES (AP)—He’s not milking his fame, but Ryan Gosling is lending his name to the cause of cows.

The 32-year-old actor sent a letter this week to the National Milk Producers Federation urging the group to advocate against the industry practice of removing calves’ horns. He asks that they help stop what he calls a “barbaric practice” by requiring farmers to breed naturally hornless cattle.

The letter was released Wednesday by People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals. Gosling has worked with the group before in its campaign urging KFC to adopt more humane methods of slaughtering chickens.

A spokesman from the National Milk Producers Federation said Wednesday that cows’ horns are dangerous and de-horning reduces injuries to both cows and people.

Actor Ryan Gosling attends the premiere of Focus Features’ “The Place Beyond The Pines” at the Landmark Sunshine Theater on Thursday March 28, 2013 in New York.

AP

Richie Sambora to miss part of Bon Jovi tour

TRENTON, N.J. (AP)—Guitarist Richie Sambora will not be performing with Bon Jovi during the current leg of the band’s Because We Can tour.

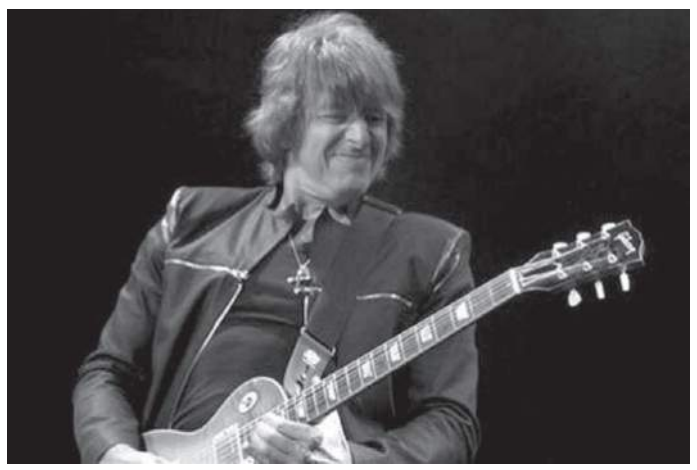
The band, on its website, cited “personal issues.” The band says all shows will go on as scheduled. No other information was given.

Hours before the announcement late Tuesday, Sambora tweeted that he was “Watching more of the `Every Road Leads Home To You’ cover videos.” That was a reference to a fan contest promoting a song on his solo album “Aftermath of the Lowdown.”

The 53-year-old has struggled with substance abuse. He has done several stints in rehab.

Bon Jovi is slated to perform in Edmonton, Canada, on Wednesday and the current leg of the tour is scheduled to end April 25 in San Jose, Calif.

Bon Jovi’s 12th album, “What About Now,” debuted at No. 1 on the Billboard 200 albums chart last month.



AP

This May 20, 2012 file photo shows Bon Jovi guitarist Richie Sambora performing at the Bamboozle Festival in Asbury Park N.J.

Oscar winner, author Ruth Prawer Jhabvala dies

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Oscar-winning screenwriter and award-winning novelist Ruth Prawer Jhabvala has died. She was 85.

Firoza Jhabvala said Wednesday that her mother died in New York after a long illness.

Ruth Prawer Jhabvala was a longtime member of Merchant Ivory Productions, writing 22 films over four decades. She won two Academy Awards for her adaptations of the E.M. Forster novels “Howards End” and “A Room With a View.” She was also nominated for adapting 1993’s “The Remains of the Day.” All three films were also best-picture contenders.

“Ruth Prawer Jhabvala has been a beloved member of the Merchant Ivory family since 1960, comprising one-third of our indomitable trifecta that included director James Ivory and the late producer Ismail Merchant,” said the company’s director of development, Neil Jesuele. “The passing of our two-time Academy Award winning screenwriter is a significant loss to the global film community.”

Jhabvala was also recognized for her fiction, receiving Britain’s highest literary honor for her 1975 novel, “Heat and Dust.” Her stories appeared in The New Yorker magazine, the most recent just last month.

Jhabvala is survived by Firoza Jhabvala and two other daughters, her husband Cyrus Jhabvala, and six grandchildren.

Man battling booze feels he’s drowning in clutter

By ABIGAIL VAN BUREN
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

Dear Abby

DEAR ABBY: I met the woman of my dreams about a year ago. Her husband had died about two months before our paths crossed. She has two teenage daughters I’m very fond of.

I have a history of alcoholism and she’s a hoarder. A week ago, I had an “epiphany”: I am desperately trying to quit drinking for my own sake.

Abby, I am a clean freak living with a hoarder. I come home from work and get depressed and stressed from looking at all the clutter. It is driving me insane. I feel like it is triggering me to stay drunk every night.

I don’t want to lose this woman and her family, but I can’t coexist in this house. I have left several times, only to miss her and go back. I’m trying to kick the booze, but I know I won’t be able to achieve sobriety while living in this house.

TRULY TORN IN TEXAS

DEAR TRULY TORN: If you quit drinking only a week ago, it is important that you find an AA group to help you hang onto your sobriety. That’s step one.

Next, realize that you and the lady you’re living with may share a similar problem. You say you are a “clean freak.” This can be a symptom of an obsessive-compulsive disorder. Hoarding can be a symptom of the same disorder.

The International OCD Foundation is a reliable resource that may be able to help you both. It offers individuals with this disorder the support they need to manage their symptoms, and has many local chapters. You can locate it online at www.ocfoundation.org or reach it by calling 617-973-5801.

■ ■ ■

DEAR ABBY: Maybe you would like to pass this on to the parents of teenage boys. It worked for me when I had the sex talk with my sons. I knew their brains had not yet fully developed. They thought they were invincible and had an “it could never happen to me” attitude.

Because money seems to be the one thing at that age they can relate to, I decided to turn it into a mathematical problem: I told them that if they got a girl pregnant, they could figure on a minimum of $300 a month child support, multiplied by 12 months for 18 years. (That totals $65,000—unless the girl has twins, which would double the amount.)

Then I told them if they were tempted to have unprotected sex, they should look at the girl and ask themselves if they would pay her $65,000 to have sex with them. If they couldn’t answer yes, then they needed to walk away.

Abby, it worked! No grandchildren appeared until after they were married. Feel free to share this with other parents who would appreciate a “non-traditional” approach that is effective

TONY IN SAN DIEGO

DEAR TONY: Gladly. I’m passing your technique along because money is a great motivator, and your idea makes “cents.”

■ ■ ■

DEAR ABBY: My roommate insists that undershirts should be washed right-side-out. I say as long as you’re using detergent and bleach, it doesn’t matter. Who is right?

MR. CLEAN IN OCEANSIDE, CALIF.

DEAR MR. CLEAN: I don’t claim to be a domestic goddess, but I don’t think there is a right or wrong way to wash undershirts. I have heard, however, that washing garments inside out will prevent lint buildup on the outside, and in the case of denim, less fading.

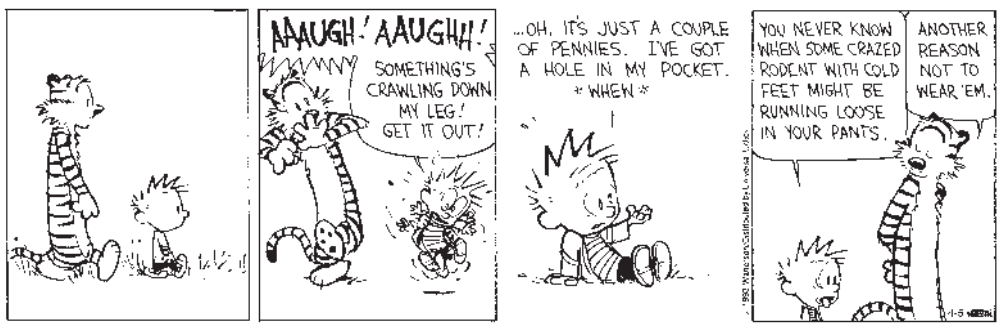
Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Write Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

Good advice for everyone – teens to seniors – is in “The Anger in All of Us and How to Deal With It.” To order, send your name and mailing address, plus check or money order for $7 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby, Anger Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Shipping and handling are included in the price.)

Pastimes

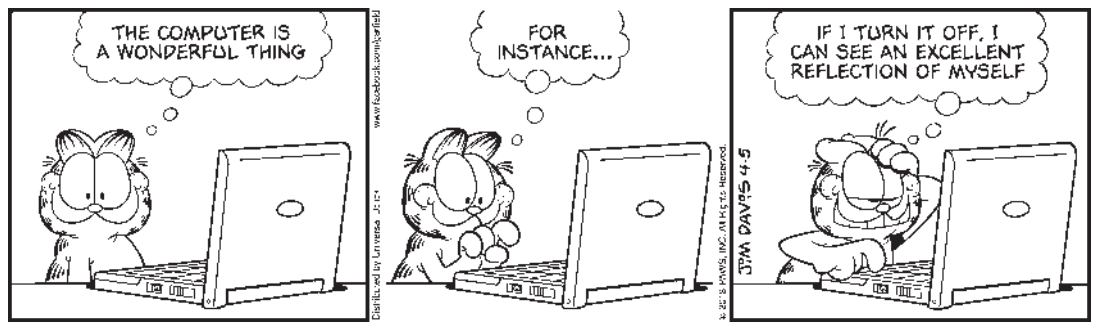
Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Waterson


AAAUGH! AAUGHH!
SOMETHING'S CRAWLING DOWN MY LEG! GET IT OUT!
...OH, IT'S JUST A COUPLE OF PENNIES. I'VE GOT A HOLE IN MY POCKET.
* WHEN *
YOU NEVER KNOW WHEN SOME CRAZED RODENT WITH COLD FEET MIGHT BE RUNNING LOOSE IN YOUR PANTS.
ANOTHER REASON NOT TO WEAR 'EM.

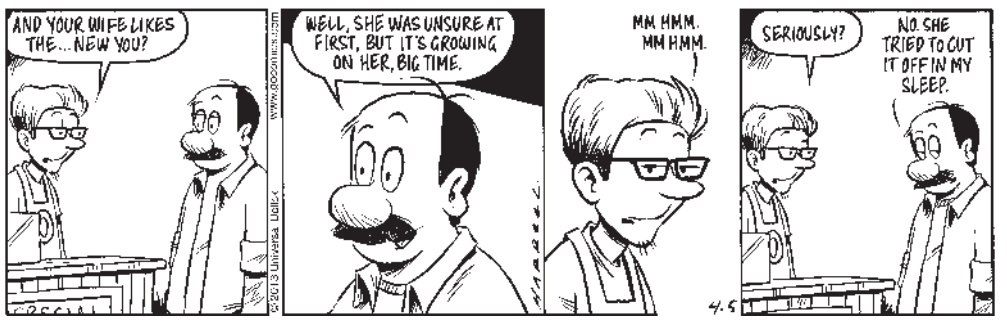
Garfield®

By Jim Davis



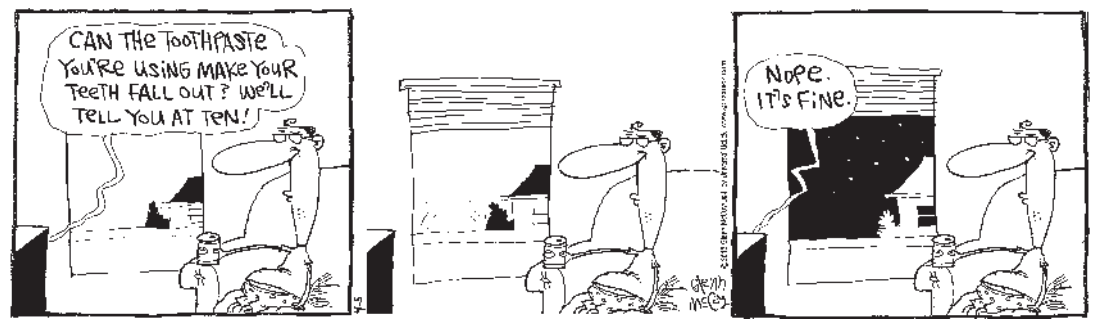
Adam@home

By Bryan Basset


AND YOUR WIFE LIKES THE...NEW YOU?
WELL, SHE WAS UNSURE AT FIRST, BUT IT'S GROWING ON HER, BIG TIME.
MM HMM. MM HMM.
SERIOUSLY?
NO. SHE TRIED TO CUT IT OFF IN MY SLEEP.
4-5

The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy



CROSSWORD

By Eugene Sheffer

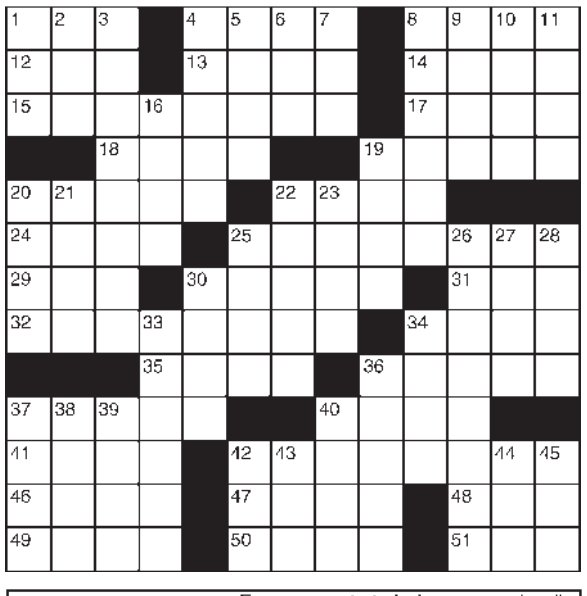
ACROSS
1 Moment, for short
4 Nevada neighbor
8 Detergent brand
12 Savings plan acronym
13 Actor LaBeouf
14 Moby Dick's pursuer
15 Insect repellents
17 "— Lisa"
18 Harbor structure
19 Asian nation
20 Not intoxicated
22 Actor Newman
24 On in years
25 San Francisco carriage
29 Under the weather
30 Divine
31 "... and seven years —"
32 1776 crossing site
34 Porn
35 Sampras of tennis
36 Vatican heads
37 "Caribbean Queen" singer Billy
40 Sleeve end
41 Bedframe piece
42 Stump
46 Drunkard
47 On
48 Carnival city
49 Do as you're told
50 Say it isn't so
51 Tackle's teammate

DOWN
1 [Uncorrected]
2 Geological period
3 "Wichita Lineman" singer
4 Leading man in the theater?
5 Norse hammer thrower
6 Melody
7 Owns
8 Mexican entree
9 Breakfast chain acronym
10 Carvey or Delany
11 Abba of Israel
16 Piper's adjective
19 Seventh of a series
20 Put into words
21 Leer at
22 Chaplain
23 Competent
25 Layer
26 Marshmallow toaster
27 Chills and fever
28 Decays
30 Verdon or Stefani
33 Carelessness?
34 Couch
36 Lightweight boxer?
37 Norway's capital
38 Organization
39 Relaxation
40 "Be a sport"
42 Scoundrel
43 Corroded
44 Martini ingredient
45 Affirmative action?

Solution time: 25 mins.

S	P	A	S	■	L	E	A	■	A	M	E	N
L	O	F	T	■	A	W	N	■	L	O	G	O
A	U	R	A	■	P	E	N	■	O	D	O	R
B	R	O	N	Z	E	■	O	A	H	U	■	■
■	■	■	D	I	L	L	Y	D	A	L	L	Y
U	P	S	E	T	■	L	E	D	■	A	Y	E
T	A	P	E	■	M	A	D	■	S	T	O	W
A	V	E	■	J	A	N	■	O	P	E	N	S
H	E	L	L	O	D	O	L	L	Y	■	■	■
■	■	L	E	N	O	■	E	D	W	A	R	D
O	B	O	E	■	N	O	D	■	A	L	A	E
D	O	U	R	■	N	A	G	■	R	I	M	E
D	O	T	S	■	A	R	E	■	E	S	P	N

Yesterday's answer 4-5



STUMPED? For answers to today's crossword, call **1-900-226-5955!** 99c per minute. touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Pharrell Williams, 39; Mike McReady, 41; Mitch Pileggi, 61; Agnetha Faltskog, 63

Happy Birthday: Put your best foot forward. Offer assistance and you will get what you want in return. Don't hesitate to follow a dream or explore an interest that will help you expand your opportunities, skills and connections. Change is upon you, but you must take the initiative and be fully prepared to make the first move. Love is highlighted. Your numbers are 9, 15, 18, 22, 31, 34, 49.

ARIES (*March 21-April 19*): Do whatever it takes to improve your environment, community or relationships with people you'd like to collaborate with. Mix business with pleasure if it will help secure the support you need to reach your goals. Love is in the stars. ✪✪✪✪

TAURUS (*April 20-May 20*): You'll size up situations with ease and know exactly how to proceed if you act on your basic instincts. A partnership will lead to a series of events that will be informative and inspiring. Avoid conflict with authority figures. ✪✪

GEMINI (*May 21-June 20*): Talking big but not following through will be your downfall and jeopardize your position. Show what you can do and offer what's reasonable—nothing more. Your reputation is at stake. Romance is on the rise. ✪✪✪✪✪

CANCER (*June 21-July 22*): Question anyone you feel uncomfortable around or who pushes you in an uncompromising direction. Don't be afraid to go it alone in order to achieve your goals. You'll gain the most if you follow a unique creative path. Protect your position. ✪✪✪

LEO (*July 23-Aug. 22*): You need to spice up your life by adding a little excitement and adventure. Engaging in a physical challenge or an intimate encounter with someone you feel drawn to will get you moving in a new direction that offers new beginnings. ✪✪✪

VIRGO (*Aug. 23-Sept. 22*): Keep your plans simple. Looking over pending legal, financial or contractual papers will help you make a wise choice regarding your professional direction. Being reasonable and responsible will lead to a bright future. Don't give in to demands. ✪✪✪

LIBRA (*Sept. 23-Oct. 22*): Expand your interests or open up to a new way of doing things. Socializing or networking will encourage new opportunities. A change in the way you view relationships will give you the confidence required to restructure an important partnership. ✪✪✪✪✪

SCORPIO (*Oct. 23-Nov. 21*): Your emotions will cause confusion if you have too many personal interests. Trying to fit too much into your day will cause you to fall short. Pick and choose who and what's most important to you. Be realistic and you won't be disappointed. ✪✪

SAGITTARIUS (*Nov. 22-Dec. 21*): Too much choice will lead to mistakes or mishaps. Put more effort into what's important to you. Disregard the demands being put on you by selfish individuals. Home, family and making your surroundings a place of comfort should be your goal. ✪✪✪✪

EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

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CAPRICORN (*Dec. 22-Jan. 19*): Not everyone will view things the same way you do. Be prepared to compromise if you want to accomplish anything at all. A unique approach to a job should be implemented in order to improve your vocational advancement. ✪✪✪

AQUARIUS (*Jan. 20-Feb. 18*): Size up your situation and refuse to let anyone stand in your way. Let your inventive mind lead the way and you will come up with a workable solution that can increase your earning potential. Don't be afraid to be different. ✪✪✪

PISCES (*Feb. 19-March 20*): Don't stifle the way you feel or alter your plans to move forward. It's expressing what you want that will help you reach your goals. Not everyone will comply, but you will find out quickly who is willing and who isn't. ✪✪✪

Birthday Baby: You are imaginative, insightful and courageous. You are an adventurer.

*Eugenia's website—**eugenialast.com**, Eugenia's android app @ **http://bit.ly/exhoro** and join Eugenia on **twitter/facebook/linkedin**.*

SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku *By Dave Green*

1			7					9
				5	4			
		7				8		
	5			6				7
	3						5	
6				9			2	
		1				3		
			4	3				
5					2			6

Difficulty Level ★★★★ 4/05

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Yesterday's SUDOKU Answer

1	6	5	2	7	8	9	3	4
3	8	7	4	6	9	2	1	5
9	2	4	1	3	5	6	8	7
7	3	2	5	8	4	1	6	9
5	9	1	3	2	6	7	4	8
8	4	6	7	9	1	5	2	3
4	1	3	6	5	7	8	9	2
2	5	9	8	1	3	4	7	6
6	7	8	9	4	2	3	5	1

Difficulty Level ★★★ 4/04

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WONDERWORD®

By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally, even backward. Find them and **CIRCLE THEIR LETTERS ONLY. DO NOT CIRCLE THE WORD.** The leftover letters spell the Wonderword.

GETTING A FLU SHOT Solution: 5 letters

R	S	D	S	W	S	E	L	C	S	U	M	S	P	E
E	E	O	C	S	I	V	S	N	S	K	I	N	C	F
S	I	C	H	H	E	N	I	P	E	M	S	U	N	F
P	G	T	O	A	I	A	T	R	R	E	D	I	U	E
I	R	O	O	M	R	L	S	E	U	E	D	S	R	C
R	E	R	L	T	M	M	D	O	R	S	A	L	S	T
A	L	E	S	S	A	E	E	R	N	F	D	D	E	I
T	L	A	I	D	N	C	N	D	E	L	I	V	E	V
O	A	C	L	I	N	I	C	D	I	N	T	I	H	E
R	K	T	A	O	U	F	P	M	E	C	A	L	T	N
Y	A	I	B	V	A	F	A	I	E	D	I	L	L	I
E	W	O	S	A	L	O	I	J	U	L	F	N	A	C
R	A	N	N	C	L	H	N	L	E	F	T	E	E	C
O	R	B	O	D	Y	I	T	G	E	R	M	S	H	A
S	E	I	D	U	T	S	T	O	P	D	O	S	E	V

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Yesterday's Answer: Halftime

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Celtics hold on to beat Pistons, make playoffs

BOSTON (AP)— Ray Allen left as a free agent. Rajon Rondo is out for the season. Kevin Garnett is recuperating from an ankle injury.

With the core of the Celtics team that won the franchise's 17th NBA title in 2008 otherwise occupied, Jeff Green led Boston back into the playoffs.

The Celtics swingman scored 34 points, including a 3-pointer with 45 seconds left to snap a two-minute scoring drought, to help Boston beat the Detroit Pistons 98-93 on Wednesday night and clinch the team's sixth consecutive playoff berth.

''We knew we were a playoff team before the season started, despite the injuries and everything,'' said Paul Pierce, the only holdover from the team that won it all in 2008 and returned to the NBA finals two years later.

''The playoffs is a totally different game; it's nothing like the regular season. At least these guys will go out there and get their feet wet, see some shots go in, rebound the ball and get some experience.''

Pierce and Brandon Bass scored 17 apiece, and Bass added seven rebounds for the Celtics, who had lost two in a row and seven of their previous nine.

The victory, coupled with Philadelphia's 88-83 loss to the Charlotte Bobcats, left Boston 8 1/2 games ahead of the 76ers with eight games to play. It's the sixth consecutive season Boston has reached the playoffs since the New Big Three was assembled in the summer of 2007.

AP

Boston Celtics guard Terrence Williams (55) passes the ball during a floor scramble for possession with Detroit Pistons forwards Jonas Jerebko, left, and Khris Middleton, right, in the second half of an NBA basketball game, Wednesday, April 3, 2013, in Boston. The Celtics won, 98-93.

Knicks 95, Hawks 82

In Atlanta, Carmelo Anthony scored 40 points — giving him 90 in two games — and Raymond Felton had three straight baskets in a key spurt, helping the New York Knicks beat the Atlanta Hawks 95-82 on Wednesday night for their 10th straight victory.

Anthony, coming off a 50-point effort in a win over Miami on Tuesday, scored 24 points in the first half. He shot 17 of 27 from the field and was 5 for 6 from the free throw line.

Felton sparked a 12-2 run that turned a tie game into an 84-74 lead for the Knicks. He scored eight of his 12 points in the fourth quarter to help the Knicks move into sole possession of second place in the Eastern Conference.

Atlanta missed an opportunity to move into a tie for fourth in the East and wasted a 25-point effort by Kyle Korver, who came up two points short of his season high.

Clippers 126, Suns 101

In Los Angeles, DeAndre Jordan had 20 points and 12 rebounds, Chris Paul added 14 points and 12 assists, and Los Angeles beat Phoenix for its franchise-record 50th win.

Willie Green and Caron Butler scored 15 points each, and Blake Griffin had nine points, seven assists and five rebounds to help the Clippers end a three-game skid with their second-highest scoring total of the season. They improved to 50-26 overall, bettering the single-season record for wins set in 1974-75 when the team was in Buffalo. They're 29-9 at home.

Wesley Johnson scored 20 points and Jermaine O'Neal added 18 for the last-place Suns, who have lost seven straight overall.

Spurs 98, Magic 84

In San Antonio, Danny Green scored 20 points and Gary Neal added 16 to pace depleted San Antonio to a victory over Orlando.

A 14-2 run that included a pair of 3-pointers by Green midway through the fourth finally allowed the Spurs to take control. Before the run, San Antonio appeared sluggish and unable to pull away from the Magic, who trailed 74-70 with 10:37 remaining.

Already without Manu Ginobili, the Spurs rested Tony Parker and Kawhi Leonard, and used Tim Duncan for only 14 minutes.

Maurice Harkless scored 18 points for Orlando.

Nuggets 113, Jazz 96

In Salt Lake City, Danilo Gallinari scored 21 points, including nine straight in the fourth quarter, and Denver ended Utah's winning streak at five.

Utah fell a half-game behind the idle Lakers for the eighth playoff spot in the West.

Kenneth Faried added 19 points for the Nuggets, who won three of four against Utah this season and are in third place in the West, two games ahead of the Clippers.

Gordon Hayward led the Jazz with 18 points, while Al Jefferson and Paul Millsap scored 16 apiece for Utah, which made 19 3-pointers in two previous games but was just 6 of 20 from beyond the arc in this one.

Grizzlies 96, Trail Blazers 76

In Portland, Mike Conley scored 20 points and the Memphis Grizzlies set a franchise record for wins in a season with a 94-76 victory over the Portland Trail Blazers on Wednesday night.

With four straight wins, Memphis improved to 51-24, surpassing its 50-win season in 2003-04. The Grizzlies have already clinched a spot in the playoffs and are jockeying for home-court advantage in the first round.

Former Blazer Zach Randolph, who played his first six seasons in Portland from 2001-07, added 17 points and eight rebounds for Memphis.

The Blazers, who are effectively out of the playoffs with seven games left, were without two starters, LaMarcus Aldridge and Nicolas Batum. As a result, the team started rookies Victor Claver, Meyers Leonard and Damian Lillard.

Warriors 98, Hornets 88

In Oakland, David Lee had 23 points and 16 rebounds, Stephen Curry added 20 points and nine assists, and the Golden State Warriors shook off a slow start to ease past the New Orleans Hornets 98-88 on Wednesday night.

Jarrett Jack finished with 19 points and eight assists off the bench against his former team to keep the Warriors in sixth place in the Western Conference playoff chase. Golden State (43-32) remained one game ahead of Houston (42-33), which won 112-102 at Sacramento.

The Rockets own the tie-breaker after going 3-1 against the Warriors this season.

Eric Gordon scored 21 points and Robin Lopez had 17 points and seven rebounds for the Hornets, who were swept 4-0 by the Warriors this season. New Orleans led by 11 points in the second quarter before the Warriors surged ahead for good.

Rockets 112, Kings 102

In Sacramento, Chandler Parsons scored 29 points and James Harden added 21 to lead the Houston Rockets to a 112-102 victory over the Sacramento Kings on Wednesday night.

Parsons and Harden, the team's two leading scorers, returned to the lineup to help the Rockets win their third straight and eighth in 11 games. Parsons, who made 12 of 18 shots, had missed the previous game with food poisoning, while Harden had been nursing a foot injury. Harden also has nine rebounds and seven assists.

Omer Asik had 19 points and 10 rebounds, Jeremy Lin had 15 points and 10 assists, and Terrence Jones chipped in with 14 points and 11 rebounds for Houston, which is in seventh place in the Western Conference.

Timberwolves 107, Bucks 98

In Milwaukee, theMinnesota Timberwolves entered Wednesday night's game against the Bucks as the worst 3-point shooting team in the NBA.

It sure didn't show.

Nikola Pekovic scored 27 points and the Timberwolves made eight of 13 shots from beyond the arc in a 107-98 win over the Bucks that leaves Minnesota's Rick Adelman one shy of becoming the 11th coach to reach 1,000 NBA victories.

Ricky Rubio had 18 points - shooting 5-of-6 from long range - and added 12 assists and eight steals for the Wolves. Prior to Wednesday night, Rubio hadn't made more than two 3-pointers in a game over his two-year NBA career.

"I have been comfortable with my legs and I have my strength in my legs and I'm getting more shots. Shooting is one of the things I have to improve upon,'' said Rubio, known more for his slick passing skills. "Since I have been a professional, I have not been a good shooter.''

Nets 113, Cavaliers 95

In Cleveland, Deron Williams scored 24 points and Brooklyn ended an eight-game road trip by crushing Cleveland, giving the Nets a record for road wins in a season.

The Nets shot 83 percent (15 of 18) in the second quarter, when they outscored the Cavs 38-16 and opened a 30-point lead without much of a fight. Brooklyn's 21 road wins are the most for the franchise, which moved to the New York City borough from New Jersey this season.

Armstrong to make splash in return

AUSTIN, Texas (AP)—Lance Armstrong is looking to make a splash with a return to competition.

The disgraced cyclist is signed up to swim three events this weekend at the Masters South Central Zone Swimming Championships at the University of Texas. Armstrong spokesman Mark Higgins said Wednesday that Armstrong, 41, will compete in the 40-44 age group in the 500-, 1,000- and the 1,650-yard freestyle.

Rob Butcher, executive director of U.S. Masters Swimming, said the organization is not covered under the same anti-doping rules as the U.S. Anti-Doping Agency, which banned Armstrong for life from its sanctioned events for his performance-enhancing drug use during his cycling career.

"Our mission, dating back to the 60s, is we encourage adults to swim," Butcher said. "Lance is a member of USMS so he is eligible to swim."

But the U.S. Master's Swimming web site suggests U.S. Masters Swimming falls under the umbrella of FINA, the international swimming federation, which is covered by the World Anti-Doping Code that bars Armstrong from competing. The web site portion covering rules links to the FINA Masters rules, which states FINA adopted the World Anti-Doping Code in 2007.

Butcher and Higgins did not immediately respond to emails Wednesday night seeking clarification.

U.S. Master's Swimming does not drug test. Butcher said earlier in the day U.S. Masters Swimming has debated in the past whether to start testing and whether Armstrong or other athletes who have been caught doping should be allowed to compete.

"We just stick to the fact that our purpose is encouraging adults to swim," Butcher said.

Armstrong had been pursuing a post-cycling career in triathlons before he was banned by USADA for performance-enhancing drug use. A message was left seeking comment from USADA.

Armstrong had to register for the Austin event by March 31. According to the meet event sheets, Armstrong has the second-best qualifying time in the 1,000 and No. 3 in the 1,650 and 500.

Cards need to shuffle backcourt without Kevin Ware

ATLANTA (AP)—Louisville will have a new backcourt rotation for the Final Four without Kevin Ware in the lineup.

The sophomore guard, who was a regular substitution for starters Peyton Siva and Russ Smith, broke his right leg in Sunday's 85-63 victory over Duke in the Midwest Regional final.

Now Louisville coach Rick Pitino is faced with tweaking his rotation to fill the void left by Ware's absence.

Pitino is mulling shifting small forwards Wayne Blackshear and Luke Hancock to the backcourt in some defensive situations for Saturday's national semifinal against Wichita State at the Georgia Dome. Even junior walk-on Tim Henderson, usually a late-game substitute for Louisville (33-5), could see expanded minutes as the Cardinals try to maintain a nine-deep rotation.

''Kevin really, really hurts our basketball team not being there because we were short on backcourt substitutions,'' Pitino said during a teleconference of Final Four coaches.

''As you all watched, Kevin has great speed and length. He was playing the best basketball. Now, you don't have any backcourt rotations. You only have two backcourt players, Russ and Peyton. You can't play them all those minutes.''

AP

Louisville basketball player Kevin Ware answers questions during a press conference, Wednesday April 3, 2013, at the KFC Yum! Center practice facility in Louisville, Ky. Ware was released from an Indianapolis hospital Tuesday, two days after millions watched him break his right leg on a horrifying play trying to block a shot during an NCAA college basketball regional championship game against Duke.

At the same time, Smith and Siva are used to spending a lot of time on the court during the postseason.

Both averaged at least 31 minutes during the Big East tournament, and Smith is averaging 31.3 during NCAA play, including 34 on Sunday. Siva played 33 against Duke and averaging 27.5 minutes through four tournament games.

The 6-foot-2 Ware was important in providing both a breather and had become a significant contributor toward the end of the regular season. He scored a career-high 11 points in Friday's 77-69 win over Oregon and had five assists, two rebounds and two steals in the previous tournament win against Colorado State.

Ware returned to campus Tuesday afternoon after two days in an Indianapolis hospital following surgery to repair compound fractures of the tibia.

Louisville guard upbeat despite broken leg

Ware is pretty certain how his next few months will play out.

"After we win the national championship," the injured Louisville guard said with a smile on his face, "I'm just looking forward to rehab."

Ware is already set for his next step, though he is gingerly walking around on crutches and with his surgically repaired broken leg in a cast up to his right knee: He is heading to the Final Four.

Ware was cleared Wednesday by doctors to accompany the Cardinals on their hour-long flight to Atlanta and he did just that. The last player to enter the team's hotel in Georgia, he was greeted with cheers when he came through the door in a wheelchair. He waved to fans as he entered an elevator.

"It's like he's never left," teammate Peyton Siva said. "Words can't explain our feelings to have him back with us."

Ware plans to be a full participant in preparations for Saturday's game against Wichita State, including sitting on the bench. And the Cardinals will wear new warm-up gear to honor the sophomore, with Ware's No. 5 replacing the "S" in the "Rise to the Occasion" T-shirts they've been wearing.

"To see him up again—just to see a picture of him up again is awesome," Siva said. "Now he's up walking with a broken leg, crutching around."

Ware said the overwhelming support he has received has helped him maintain his spirits and strengthened his confidence of a full recovery. He hopes by next season to be helping the Cardinals defend the national championship he believes they'll win this weekend.

The normally reserved 20-year-old calmly recalled how he felt when he suffered the devastating injury, saying he doesn't think Louisville would be in the Final Four if he had lost his composure.

Ware credits teammate Luke Hancock for calming him down.

"He got me to that point where I really had to put the pain on hold," said Ware, with his leg in a cast propped up on a couch. "Once he said his prayer, I was kind of thinking the whole time, `you can either be a crybaby about it or you're going to get your team back and get them in the right mindset'.

"Luke said his words, and I just kept repeating, `y'all gotta go win this game.' I'm fine. ... It really helped the team."

But it wasn't easy for the Cardinals, many of whom cried after seeing Ware's gruesome injury—his bone protruding six inches through his skin.

Even Pitino was emotional, wiping tears from his eyes and later saying that the sight of his player's injury almost made him vomit.

But Pitino said everyone's emotions have settled down knowing that it appears Ware will be OK.

"I think we're all fine now," Pitino said. "Just having Kevin around, we can exhale."

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Red Sox chill Yanks for first time since 1999

NEW YORK (AP)- Clay Buchholz chilled the Yankees' bats, speedy Jackie Bradley Jr. got his first major league hit and the Boston Red Sox beat New York 7-4 on a cold Wednesday night to open a season with consecutive wins for the first time since 1999.

Pitcher Hiroki Kuroda became the latest Yankees player to get hurt, leaving in the second inning with a 2-0 deficit, four batters after Shane Victorino's line drive bruised the middle finger of his pitching hand.

While the Red Sox under new manager John Farrell are off to their best start since going 5-0 in 1999, New York has been outscored 15-6 and outhit 26-15. The Yankees have failed to hold a lead at any point in their opening two games for the first time since 1998.

Boston burst ahead 6-0 with a four-run third against Cody Eppley, and the Yankees never challenged.

Buchholz (1-0) allowed one run and six hits in seven innings. Joel Hanrahan pitched the ninth for his first save with Boston.

New York said Kuroda (0-1) was being sent for X-rays and other tests.

Boston Red Sox second baseman Dustin Pedroia (15) throws to first after New York Yankees' Francisco Cervelli, not shown, grounded into a force out during the ninth inning of their baseball game at Yankee Stadium in New York, Wednesday, April 3, 2013. Cervelli reached first on the play, but Eduardo Nunez (26) was out at second.

Rangers 4, Astros 0

In Houston, a day after Yu Darvish came within one out of a perfect game, Alexi Ogando and four Texas relievers shut out Houston again, combining for a five-hitter.

Lance Berkman doubled in a run for the Rangers a day after they blanked the Astros 7-0 behind Darvish's nearly historic gem.

Ogando (1-0) allowed four hits with a career-high 10 strikeouts in 6 1-3 innings. The young and inexperienced Astros have struck out 43 times in their first three games.

It's the most strikeouts a pitching staff has combined for in the first three games of a season in major league history, and the most since Cleveland fanned 42 in the first three of the 1966 season.

Philip Humber (0-1) allowed a run and five hits over 5 2-3 innings in his Astros debut.

Rays 8, Orioles 7

In St.Petersburgh, Matt Joyce led off the bottom of the ninth inning with a towering home run against Tommy Hunter, giving Tampa Bay the victory.

Shelley Duncan hit a three-run homer and Ben Zobrist had a pair of RBI singles for the Rays, who twice came from behind before wasting a late two-run lead.

Fernando Rodney (1-0) blew a save opportunity by allowing a run for the first time since last Aug. 18. Brian Roberts' RBI double off Rodney in the ninth made it 7-all.

Chris Davis went 4 for 4 for the Orioles, hitting a three-run homer for the second straight day and driving in four runs.

Joyce, who had a bunt single as a pinch hitter in the seventh, won it by homering on a 2-1 pitch from Hunter (0-1).

Indians 3, Blue Jays 2

In Toronto, Mark Reynolds hit a tie-breaking home run in the 11th inning for Cleveland.

Reynolds drilled a leadoff shot into the second deck off Sergio Santos (0-1), the fifth Blue Jays reliever.

The homer helped the Indians overcome a blown save by Chris Perez, who surrendered a tying shot by Jose Bautista in the ninth.

The overhauled Blue Jays lost their second straight to begin the season. Toronto's offense has just three runs and nine hits in two games.

Matt Albers (1-0) got one out for the win, and Joe Smith finished for his first save.

White Sox 5, Royals 2

In Chicago, Adam Dunn hit one of Chicago's four homers, leading Jake Peavy and the White Sox to the victory.

Tyler Flowers, Dayan Viciedo and Alexei Ramirez also connected, and the White Sox made it two straight wins to start the season after dropping 12 of 18 to Kansas City a year ago.

The Royals, full of optimism after posting the majors' best record in spring training, will try to avoid a season-opening sweep Thursday.

Peavy (1-0) allowed an earned run and four hits in six innings. Addison Reed worked the ninth for his second save.

Ervin Santana (0-1) pitched six innings in his Kansas City debut and was charged with four runs and five hits.

Twins 3, Tigers 2

In Minneapolis, Eduardo Escobar's two-run double with one out in the ninth inning lifted Minnesota to the win.

After Joaquin Benoit issued a leadoff walk to Trevor Plouffe, reliever Phil Coke took over. Coke got the first out, but Brian Dozier's single advanced pinch-runner Jamey Carroll to third. Escobar then drove the next pitch from Coke to the deepest part of the park in front of the bullpens in left-center field.

Both runners scored easily as the rebuilding Twins enjoyed their first on-field celebration of the season. The AL Central champion Tigers began the season without a set closer after Jose Valverde wasn't brought back.

Anibal Sanchez threw five scoreless innings for Detroit. But after a two-up, two-down save on Monday, Coke (0-1) blew his chance in this one.

Athletics 6, Mariners 2

In Oakland, Joe Saunders couldn't find a good grip on the ball and lasted just four innings in his first start with Seattle.

It could have been worse, the way Mariners manager Eric Wedge saw it.

Saunders gave up seven hits, including five doubles, and Seattle managed just two runners over the final seven innings of a 6-2 loss to the Oakland Athletics on Wednesday night.

"It felt like the balls had some funny stuff on them," said Saunders, who walked four and struck out three. "It just felt like some of them were just taking off. My arm felt good. It was just tough to grip the ball."

Braves 9, Phillies 2

In Atlanta, Justin Upton, Jason Heyward and rookie Evan Gattis homered, helping Paul Maholm and the Atlanta Braves beat the Philadelphia Phillies 9-2 on Wednesday night.

Freddie Freeman had three RBIs as the Braves chased Roy Halladay in the fourth inning. Upton belted a two-run shot in the first to give him a pair of homers in his first two games for Atlanta.

Halladay (0-1), who struggled with a sore shoulder last season and had a difficult spring training, gave up five runs and six hits in 3 1-3 innings. The two-time Cy Young Award winner struck out nine, but dropped to 0-4 with an 8.00 ERA in his last seven starts against Atlanta.

Nationals 3, Marlins 0

In Washington, left-hander Gio Gonzalez homered, providing all the offense necessary to back his six scoreless innings, and Washington picked up another win.

Gonzalez (1-0), a 21-game winner in 2012 who finished third in NL Cy Young Award voting, allowed only two hits, along with five strikeouts and two walks.

His solo shot to left field off Kevin Slowey (0-1) came with one out in the fifth. Slowey gave up one run and four hits in 5 1-3 innings.

After hitting two homers in Game 1, Nationals left fielder Bryce Harper went 2 for 4 with a double. The 2012 NL Rookie of the Year scored on Ryan Zimmerman's single in the eighth off A.J. Ramos.

Mets 8, Padres 4

In New York, Matt Harvey allowed one hit and struck out 10 in seven scoreless innings for his first win at Citi Field, and Lucas Duda hit the first of the Mets' three homers in a whipping wind.

John Buck and Ike Davis also connected against Clayton Richard in the Mets' second straight romp over San Diego. They opened the season with an 11-2 win Monday.

David Wright added an RBI double in a game that began with a wind chill of 32 degrees.

Making his 11th career start and fifth at home, the 24-year-old Harvey (1-0) didn't allow a baserunner until Everth Cabrera singled to center field leading off the fourth.

Richard (0-1) gave up eight runs in 4 1-3 innings.

Pirates 3, Cubs 0

In Pittsburgh, Wandy Rodriguez allowed just two hits over 6 2-3 innings and Pittsburgh earned its first win of the year.

Andrew McCutchen smacked an RBI double for the Pirates. Starling Marte and Gaby Sanchez also drove in a run, more than enough for Rodriguez on a frigid night.

Jason Grilli, promoted to the closer's role in the offseason, worked the ninth for his first save.

Rodriguez (1-0), acquired in a trade deadline deal with Houston last July, struck out six and walked one in a continuation of his strong spring.

Edwin Jackson (0-1) gave up two runs in five innings but lost to the Pirates for the first time in seven career starts. The Cubs produced just two singles and only put a runner on third once.

Giants 5, Dodgers 3

In Los Angeles, Tim Lincecum walked seven, matching a career worst, yet still managed to get the win when Pablo Sandoval and Hunter Pence homered to lead the San Francisco Giants to a 5-3 victory over the Los Angeles Dodgers on Wednesday night in the rubber game of their season-opening series.

Lincecum (1-0) threw 91 pitches in five innings, but limited the Dodgers to two unearned runs and three hits. He struck out four while outperforming Josh Beckett in a matchup of marquee pitchers coming off the worst season of their respective careers.

Beckett (0-1) was charged with five runs, three earned, and six hits in six innings. Carl Crawford had three hits and scored a run for Los Angeles.

Brewers 7, Rockies 3

In Milwaukee, Ron Roenicke knows what his Brewers pitching staff needs to do.

Getting it done might be easier said than done.

Juan Nicasio pitched six effective innings for his first victory in almost a year while Wilin Rosario, Michael Cuddyer and Dexter Fowler homered to lift the Colorado Rockies over the Brewers 7-3 on Wednesday night.

"We need to pitch better," Roenicke said after the Rockies scored 12 of their 19 runs scored in the three-game series off eight home runs. "We need to pitch better as starters and as relievers. We got get ahead of people. I know it's early, but we still need to pitch better."

Mets 8, Padres 4

In New York, Clayton Richard refused to blame the chilly conditions on his subpar performance. Poor command was the problem.

Richard gave up three two-run homers, and the San Diego Padres mustered only one hit against young Mets power pitcher Matt Harvey in seven innings of an 8-4 loss Wednesday night.

Pitching in a whipping wind, the left-handed Richard gave up two-run homers to lefty swinging Lucas Duda and Ike Davis, and another to John Buck. Not the way he wanted to start the season after allowing an NL-high 31 long-balls last season.

Roach still dreams of Pacquiao-JMM 5th fight

BOXING

MACAU — A fifth fight between Manny Pacquiao and Juan Manuel Marquez in Mexico City.

"A rematch, more than anything else," Hall of Fame trainer Freddie Roach declared before Filipino sportswriters at The Venetian Macao yesterday afternoon. "It's the best fight out there."

Roach, a five-time trainer of the year, said he doesn't mind if Pacquiao-Marquez V is held in Mexico, just for the Filipino eight-division world champion to get the chance to redeem himself from that horrific sixth round knockout dealt by Marquez last Dec. 8 in Las Vegas.

Recalling the key moment when Marquez caught a charging Pacquiao with a dynamite right barely a second to go in the round, Roach said it was both perfect timing and luck that paved the way for Marquez's stunning victory.

"He (Marquez) got lucky," said Roach, who is in this new gambling mecca as chief trainer of Chinese sports hero Zou Shiming, a two-time Olympic champion, who's making his pro debut on Saturday at the 15,000 seat Cotai Arena.

AP

Manny Pacquiao, left, and Juan Manuel Márquez get involved in the preliminaries before their fight for the WBO welterweight title in Las Vegas in December last year.

"That (Marquez fight) is the biggest out there, and the most dangerous," said Roach.

So popular is Zou in China that his four-round fight against Mexican Eleazar Valenzuela (2-1-1, 1 KO), is considered the main attraction, overshadowing Brian Viloria's defense of his WBO and WBA flyweight titles against Mexican Juan Francisco Estrada in the fight card promoted by Top Rank Inc.

The 32-year-old Viloria (32-3 with 19 KOs) was scheduled to train under Marvin Somodio, Roach's understudy, yesterday afternoon as he stepped up his bid to make Estrada (22-2, 17 KOs) his 19th Mexican victim.

Meanwhile, the possibility of Pacquiao fighting in the United States in his next bout keeps getting dim with each passing day.

"Very slim," venerable promoter Bob Arum, referring to Pacquiao's return to the ring mid-September, told Filipino sportswriters here.

And the main stumbling block, according to Arum is the prohibitive taxes (at least 39.6 percent) that will be slashed from Pacquiao's purse if he fights in Las Vegas. ***(PDI)***

21 YOUTH

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head and assistant coaches, respectively. NMIFA technical director Johann Noetzel is the goalkeeper coach, while Derek Chambers and Gary Ramsey will join the CNMI delegation to Beijing as team manager and doctor, respectively.

The CNMI delegation will leave Saipan for the April 20 to 26 tournament on April 18 and will use the remaining days to strengthen the players' conditioning.

According to Angeles, the team started training in October last year and when asked to rank (from 1 to 10) how ready is the squad for the AFC tournament, he answered 8.

"We need some finishing touches. Our players need to work on decision-making on the field, especially when everybody is exhausted and tired. It will come down to executing the basics. Making wrong decisions will cost the team goals. We need to improve their stamina and endurance as well," Angeles said.

The assistant coach added they are counting on members of the team who competed in the AFC U-14 Boys' Festival of Football for East Asia held also in Beijing in April last year. The list includes Aninzo, Ermitanio, Calayag, Aniana, and Hinson.

"They were under coach Seki's (Kiyoshi Sekiguchi) coaching last year. The team is leaning on them," Angeles said.

Last year's U14 squad had a notable 2-2-2 win-draw-loss record in the festival, winning over Macau, 1-0, and Chinese-Taipei, 2-0, drawing China, 1-1, and Mongolia, 2-2, and losing to Guam, 0-4, and powerhouse North Korea, 0-8.

Later this month, the CNMI strikers will also face Guam, Chinese-Taipei, and China, and will be joined by South Korea in the Group G qualifier.

"South Korea is the team to beat. Our best chance of winning can be against Guam and we're looking to at least force ties against the three other countries," Angeles said.

Incidentally, the Commonwealth strikers will debut against Korea on April 20. Then the CNMI's last three matches will be against Chinese-Taipei (April 23), Guam (April 25), and host China (April 26).

Seven other groups divided into four zones will have their respective qualifiers Only the Top 2 teams from each zone will advance to the AFC U-14 Championship 2014 Finals.

HOPWOOD

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at 7.67 seconds in the 60m trial and besting six fellow MHS runners. In the boys division, Southern's Nevin Salem had the fastest qualifying time at 6.38 seconds, beating 22 other runners from Hopwood, Agape, and MBA.

Salem and Abrams also reigned supreme in the 100m trials with the former submitting 11.22 seconds and the latter' logging 12.71 seconds. Salem topped the 26-runner field, while Abrams downed five teammates and two MBA runners.

Abrams made it three in a row in the running events, as her 29.57 seconds in the 200m race prevailed against the 30.49 seconds and 30.82 seconds of teammate Riella Ichiou and MBA's Cris Obaldo, respectively.

Salem did not race in the boys U18 200m qualifier, allowing MHS' John Santy to take the top spot with his 23.77 seconds. Agape's Thanyakorn Konkoed came in next at 24.73 seconds, followed by Southern's Jesse Rabauliman (25.12 second).

In the longest race in Week 1 qualifier, MHS' Gabrielle Race posted 5:51, about two minutes faster than Agape's Junyan Xie (7:43). Agape's Beibei Chen (7:59) and Grace Jiang (9:12) and MHS' Sharmaine Alarzal (7:59) completed the girls field.

In the boys division, Agape had a 1-2 finish with Lin Zeyue and Yang Tao clocking in at 5:13.32 and 5:15.21, respectively. Eleven other runners joined the 1,500m qualifier.

Only the Top 8 finishers in the qualifiers for running and jumping competitions and Top 12 in field events will qualify to the All Schools meet, which will run from May 8 to 10.

Abrams also qualified in shot put after registering 9.88m. Her teammate Rosemarie Cruz was second (6.29m), while Xie came in at third with 4.5m. ACS' Li Ming Zhe ruled the boys qualifier with his 9.07m, followed by MBA's Hoffman Pun (8.56m) and MHS' Kereomel Ignacio (8.19m).

In the discus, Cruz earned her first top finish after submitting 13.37m, way ahead of the 9.73m of Alarzal and Zie's 7.63m. Another Agape bet prevailed in the boys discus with Huang Xi recording 20.54m and beating Ignacio (17.71m) and teammate Kong Jian Ping (17.34m).

In the U14 discus, it was an all-Hopwood show with Jeffrey Dela Cruz besting five other teammates in the boys division after tallying 26.87m. Leticia Mario had 13.07m in the girls category. Mario also had the best mark in the shot put, earning 8.66m and defeating Agape's Kate Ausncion (4.47m) and Rhine Villamayor (3.89m). Dela Cruz duplicated Mario's feat after logging 13.48m in the boys qualifier and thwarting four other students.

In the run races, Hopwood swept the 60m, 100m, and 200m qualifiers. Deiny Nito and Christian Morales had the fastest qualifying times in the 60m trials with their 9.25 seconds and 7.24 seconds, respectively. Morales was also the first qualifier in the 100m run with his 11.79 seconds, while teammate Keyreen Maras ruled the girls field with her 15.29 seconds. Then in the 200m, Dela Cruz defeated 26 other runners in the boys division after clocking in at 25.10 seconds, while Virginia Imperio prevailed against six others after logging 30.16.

MBA and SIS split the top honors in the 1,500m qualifier with the former's Won Jun Kim recording the fastest time (5:33) in the boys division and the Geckos' Tania Chan posting 7:10 and beating schoolmate Grace Choi (7:20).

TAN

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recorded the third fastest time in the swim leg' relay (28:53) and eighth overall.

Less than a week after the Tagaman, Akimaru returned to the Kan Pacific Swimming Pool to compete against Guam and Marshall Islands swimmers. The Saipan Community School student went on to top his age group (11 to 12), tying Tsunami Saipan's Hiroto Yanai. Akimaru collected 62 points from the nine events he joined in the two-day meet.

From the Marpi pool, Akimaru went to the waters off Susupe and ruled the 1.3-kilometer race of the 35th Annual SSC Ocean Swim with a time of 20:02, beating Yanai (20:15) in a sprint to the finish line.

Tan also raced in the ocean swim and was first in her age group (13 to 14) after clocking in at 36:26 (third in the women's). She earned 62 points, too, from the two-day meet at the Marpi pool to get the top high-point trophy in her age division.

In XTERRA, Angel teamed up with her father and mother, Samson and Glorybel, and the 13-year-old swimmer was ninth (out of more than 60 swimmers) out of the water (23:08). In Tagaman, the Grace Christian Academy student went on to blow female competitors, as she was first out of the water and her 27:24 was fourth overall behind male pros Ben Allen, Rory Downie, and Olivier Marceau. Then after the relay, Tan returned to American Memorial Park and did all three legs of the Taga Kids.

Camacho takes male plum

Joining the two swimmers in the March best list was slugger David Camacho.

The right handed pitcher plays for the Northern Yankees, which currently lead the Saipan Major League and are also the defending champion. Last month, he pitched 11 innings and gave up only four runs and none of them were earned.

According to SML coordinator Tony Rogolifoi, Camacho throws low in mid 80s and is being considered on the CNMI National Team that will compete in the 2014 Micronesian Games in Pohnpei.

WEEK 1

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Liza Atalig, Emily Jones, and Ami Tsukagoshi. The boys division also has six entries with Moris Villanueva and Dylan Ackerman earning byes in the first round, leaving Luther Lizama, Yun Seok Jun, Troy Young, and Colin Ramsey to battle for the remaining two semis spots.

In the U18 division, the boys and girls contests have four entries apiece. In the boys division, Rafael Jones will be pitted against Seiya Eda, while Tommy Choi and Amami Sakano will collide in the other semis pairing. Defending champion Thea Minor leads the girls cast and will meet Carol Lee in the semis, while Alina Ishikawa and Mikayla Lopez will duel in the other Final Four tiff.

In the men's Open doubles, veteran Bobby Cruz and Roy Pangelinan will test the youthful tandem of Tommy Choi and Sakano, while Donn Dunlop and Dong Min Lee will square off against coach Jeff Race and Rafael Jones.

Dunlop and Lee are also entered in the 4.0 division and will be joined by the pairs of Gary and Colin Ramsey, and Ralph Buenaventura and June Keller. In the 3.0, Ackerman and Song will dispute the crown against Don Castillo and Yeming Sang.

The women's doubles has only two divisions with four teams entered in the 3.0 and three in the Open category.

The pairs of Thea Minor and Lydia Tan, Melody Johnson and Carol Lee, and Lopez and Rastguiy will play in the round-robin competition in the Open division. The 3.0 category will feature the teams of Sakiko Eda and Chiharu Sato, Antonia Reyes and Caitlin Tinney, Chieko Nagao and Kazumi Imai, and Marivic Rosario and Tisha Ferrer.

TRIBUNE SPORTS SCORES

NBA STANDINGS

EASTERN CONFERENCE

Atlantic Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
x-New York	48	26	.649	—
x-Brooklyn	43	31	.581	5
x-Boston	39	36	.520	9½
Philadelphia	30	44	.405	18
Toronto	28	47	.373	20½

Southeast Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
z-Miami	58	16	.784	—
x-Atlanta	42	34	.553	17
Washington	28	47	.373	30½
Orlando	19	57	.250	40
Charlotte	18	57	.240	40½

Central Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
x-Indiana	48	27	.640	—
x-Chicago	40	33	.548	7
Milwaukee	36	38	.486	11½
Detroit	25	51	.329	23½
Cleveland	22	52	.297	25½

WESTERN CONFERENCE

Southwest Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
x-San Antonio	56	19	.747	—
x-Memphis	51	24	.680	5
Houston	42	33	.560	14
Dallas	36	38	.486	19½
New Orleans	26	49	.347	30

Northwest Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
x-Oklahoma City	54	20	.730	—
x-Denver	51	24	.680	3½
Utah	39	37	.513	16
Portland	33	42	.440	21½
Minnesota	28	46	.378	26

Pacific Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
x-L.A. Clippers	50	26	.658	—
Golden State	43	32	.573	6½
L.A. Lakers	39	36	.520	10½
Sacramento	27	48	.360	22½
Phoenix	23	52	.307	26½

x-clinched playoff spot
z-clinched conference

MLB STANDINGS

AMERICAN LEAGUE

East Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Boston	2	0	1.000	—
Baltimore	1	1	.500	1
Tampa Bay	1	1	.500	1
New York	0	2	.000	2
Toronto	0	2	.000	2

Central Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Chicago	2	0	1.000	—
Cleveland	2	0	1.000	—
Detroit	1	1	.500	1
Minnesota	1	1	.500	1
Kansas City	0	2	.000	2

West Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Seattle	2	1	.667	—
Texas	2	1	.667	—
Los Angeles	1	1	.500	½
Houston	1	2	.333	1
Oakland	1	2	.333	1

NATIONAL LEAGUE

East Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Atlanta	1	0	1.000	—
New York	1	0	1.000	—
Washington	1	0	1.000	—
Miami	0	1	.000	1
Philadelphia	0	1	.000	1

Central Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Chicago	1	0	1.000	—
Milwaukee	1	1	.500	½
St. Louis	1	1	.500	½
Cincinnati	0	1	.000	1
Pittsburgh	0	1	.000	1

West Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Arizona	1	1	.500	—
Colorado	1	1	.500	—
Los Angeles	1	1	.500	—
San Francisco	1	1	.500	—
San Diego	0	1	.000	½

BY THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Saipan Tribune
Sports

21 youth players off to AFC event

Anthony Fruit, right, juggles with the ball, while teammate Alex Park looks on during a clinic they attended early this year at the Oleai Sports Complex Field. Fruit and Park are on the 21-player roster of the CNMI Boys U14 National Team.
ROSELYN B.MONROYO

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

Northern Mariana Islands Football Association has named the 21-player CNMI Boys U14 National Team that will compete in the AFC U14 Championship 2014 Qualifiers in Beijing, China later this month.

Making it to the traveling team are MP United's Alex Park, Clayton Izuka, Joshua Abragan, Steve Martin, and Sun Joon Tenorio, Matansa's Euly James Ermitanio, Alan Hinson, David Mafnas, Cody Leon, and Joshua De Leon, Tan Holding's Louie Bryle Calayag, Emmanuel Aniana, Mareko Tekopua, Jherico Tiamzon, Christopher Aninzo, and Albert Bergancia, Paire's Cole Chambers, Won Kwan Kim, Logan Mister, and Anthony Fruit, and Shirley's Edwin Kim. Matansa's Marlouie Santiago and Shirley's Yaraweschigh Yhemar are named reserves, while Wai Wo "Jacky" Lee and Jershwin Angeles will serve as

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Tan, Akimaru named March best

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

ATHLETES of the MONTH

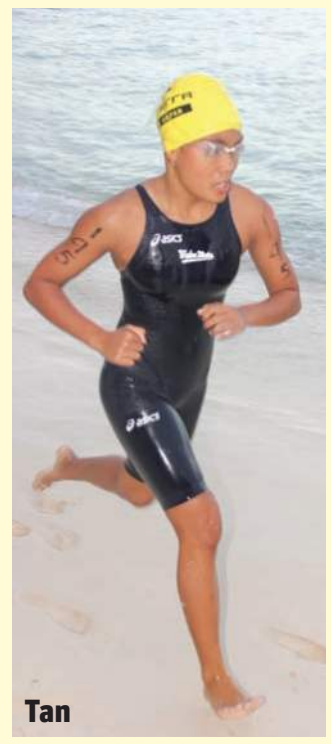
Swimmers Kento Akimaru and Angel Marie Tan shared March's top honors after Northern Marianas Amateur Sports Association selected them as NMASA/TSL Student Athletes of the Month.

Akimaru of Saipan Swim Club and Tsunami Saipan's Tan earned NMASA's nods last night after their outstanding performance in various tournaments last month. Akimaru and Tan competed in the relay events of both the 2013 XTERRA Saipan on March 9 and the Tagaman Triathlon on March 16 and then joined the 2013 SSC International Invitational Swim Meet and the 35th Annual SSC Ocean Swim on March 23 and 24, respectively.

The 12-year-old Akimaru teamed up with Erico Castro and Goshi Sato and the trio topped the men's relay event in XTERRA after combining for 3:41:44. Akimaru's team was the lone squad to complete the 1.5-kilometer swim, 32K bike, and 12K run under three hours and his 22:58 was seventh overall in the swim leg behind a bunch of pros.

Then in Tagaman, Akimaru joined forces with Castro anew and runner Charlie Sendin and their Taro Sue Team also finished first in the men's and second overall. The SSC swimmer

See TAN on Page 31


Tan

Akimaru

Hopwood, MHS live up to expectations

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

Northern Marianas Athletics

Marianas High School and Hopwood Junior High School proved they are the teams to beat in their respective divisions after showing their might in Week 1 of the qualifying events for the 2013 PSS/McDonald's All Schools Championships.

The Dolphins topped six of the 11 qualifiers for high school on March 21 at the Oleai Sports Complex, while Hopwood recorded 11 first place finishes in 13 events. Saipan International School and Marianas Baptist Academy split the two other top honors in the junior high, while Agape Christian School and Saipan Southern High School ruled three and two events, respectively, in the U18 category.

Pacific Games veteran Rachel Abrams gave the Dolphins their first top finish, timing in

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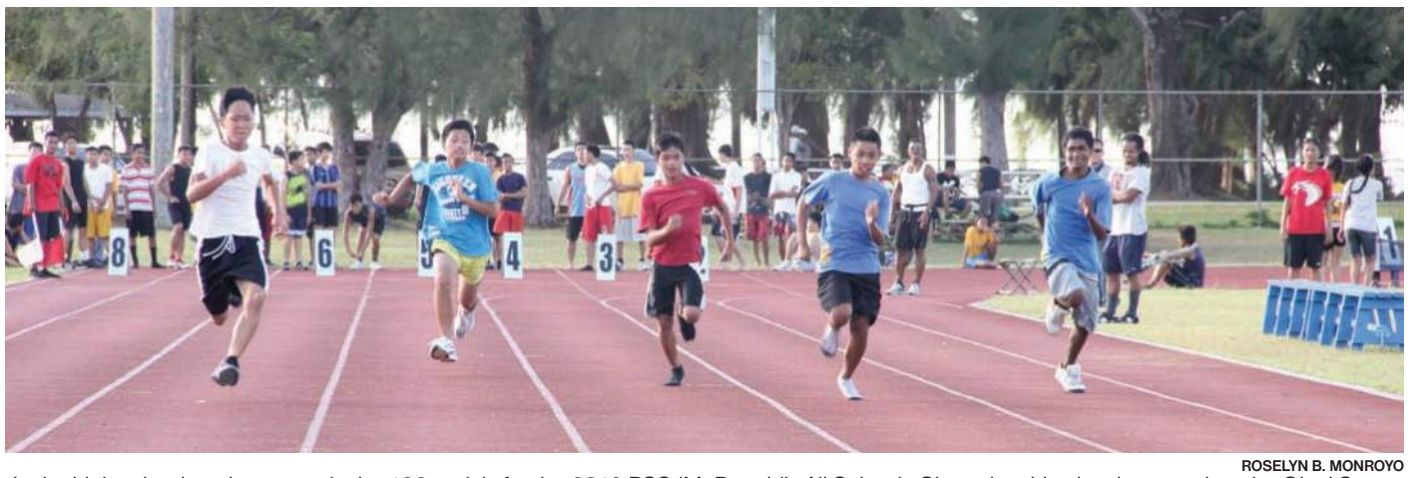
ROSELYN B. MONROYO
Junior high school students race in the 100m trials for the 2013 PSS/McDonald's All Schools Championships late last month at the Oleai Sports Complex.

Week 1 of PIC tennis draws more than 60 entries

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

Draws for Week 1 of the 13th Annual PIC Tennis Championships are out with this weekend's competition featuring 24 players in the junior boys singles, 22 in the girls, and 22 pairs in the doubles.

The boys U12 singles lured the most entries with 14 players and Vincent Tudela and Joshua Abragan are the Top 2 seeds and earned byes in the first round. The rest of the field will play their first game either today or tomorrow at the Pacific Islands Club hard court. Today's opening matches will feature Sean Lee against Aditya Rai; Michael Jones versus Sun Myung Kim; Robbie Schorr over Rintaro Miyawaki; and Kevin Kim against Tony Atalig. Then this Saturday, Haruya Eda will take on Tony Kim, while Ji Min Woo will face Ken Song.

For the girls division, 12 will vie for the championship, including seeded players Tania Tan, Mimi Sakano, and Julia Ishikawa. Completing the field are Riko and Hana Oojima, Conatsu and Coume Kaga, Malika Miwawaki, Catherine Atalig, Grace Choi, Jireh Warren, and Asia Raulerson.

In the girls U15, it will be a six-player fight among top seeds Negahr Rastguiy and Isabel Heras and Julia Ishikawa,

See WEEK 1 on Page 31